



## **LUMES – Lund University Master’s Programme in Environmental Science**

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**MSc thesis:**

**“Advantages of integrating environmental communication into urban marketing strategies – consequent potential improvements on the city’s physical environment”.**

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## **PREFACE**

This thesis has been written in order to fulfil the 20 last credits of the Lund University Master's Programme in environmental sciences (LUMES) for the academic year 1999-2000.

My work has been above all theoretical, based on various sources, coming both from the field of urban management and marketing, and from the field of environment and especially environmental management. Part of the data and information collected on the city of Montpellier comes from interviews with executives working in the fields of communication or environment in the municipalities' services. I thank these persons for their help in a busy election time.

I also want to thank teachers at Lille University, notably Mrs Creton and Mrs Battiau-Queney, who have first made me learn about LUMES, and who have helped me obtain an equivalence for LUMES in France.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Richard Ek (department of Social and Economic Geography, Lund university – E-mail: [Richard.Ek@kulekgeo.lu.se](mailto:Richard.Ek@kulekgeo.lu.se) ; tel: +46 (0) 46 222 30 64) for his invaluable guidance all along the writing process and his support in the bad times. I also want to thank Åsa for her availability, kindness and her contagious enthusiasm, and all the LUMES teachers for their valuable input in various areas and their help. I would also like to add that this past year in LUMES has been wonderful not only as regards to the studies, but also and above all from a human point of view, and I want to thank all my LUMES-mates for their friendship that hopefully will last. Lastly, I thank all the friends and family who have been around me all along this long work.

*“Lots of people act well, but very few people talk well, which shows that talking is much the more difficult thing of the two, and much the finer thing also”* Oscar Wilde 1888.

## **ABSTRACT**

Cities are ever more competing to attract residents or companies, as local governments increasingly lead growth oriented and entrepreneurial policies. This private manner of managing cities rests on supposed competitive advantages of cities, coming both from their actual situation and the authorities promotions and setting up incentives policies. Urban marketing is indeed a major tool used to enhance the city's attractiveness. Such policies are environmentally and socially very unsustainable. Moreover, their economic outcome is often insignificant. Yet changes are not expected to occur soon, and the study investigates ways to bring more sustainability within this existing system, which is being criticised though. The main assumption we rely on is that environmental management is an increasing asset for cities within this competitive arena, as it is for many private firms nowadays. The integration of such a green argument into urban marketing strategies is therefore discussed. Means of communicating this concern for the environment are various, so are the expected resulting advantages. First to be faithful to a green image conveyed, the local authorities might want to improve the state of the environment in the same time. Second, expected increasing income could make cities invest more in their environmental programmes. Third, competitive advantages may arise for a city that acts green and promotes itself as such. Last but not least, the environment may indirectly benefit from such policies and from the use of marketing. However it appears that the outcome of playing this opportunity is not that worthy in terms of both economic gains and environmental improvements. The limits and adverse effects are discussed. It is clear so that the market alone seems in this case unable to solve the problem. A control at higher levels or networking are seen as potential good alternatives.

<b>INTRODUCTION AND LOGIC OF THE REPORT.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1 URBAN STRATEGIC (ENTREPRENEURIAL) MANAGEMENT.....</b>	<b>6</b>
1.1 BACKGROUND.....	6
1.1.1 <i>History of place marketing</i> .....	6
1.1.2 <i>The context: competition and growth policies</i> .....	7
1.1.3 <i>Actors involved : a new private/public consensus</i> .....	8
1.2 URBAN MARKETING: A BUSINESS TOOL APPLIED TO PLACES. ....	9
1.2.1 <i>Introduction to place marketing</i> .....	9
1.2.2 <i>Image and representation</i> .....	11
1.2.3 <i>Local communication</i> .....	14
1.2.4 <i>Marketing as a tool for city strategic planning</i> .....	15
1.2.5 <i>Analysis of the system</i> .....	17
1.3 WHAT PLACE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS ? .....	18
1.3.1 <i>People and companies' usual expectations</i> .....	18
1.3.2 <i>Entrepreneurial city versus social and environmental issues</i> .....	20
<b>2 THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION AS AN ASSET FOR THE ORGANISATION'S DEVELOPMENT.....</b>	<b>23</b>
2.1 GREEN COMMUNICATION IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.....	23
2.1.1 <i>The need for integrating environmental concerns into companies</i> .....	23
2.1.2 <i>Measures taken by companies</i> .....	24
2.1.3 <i>Environmental communication plans and Corporate Environmental Reporting</i> .....	25
2.2 STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES FOR MUNICIPAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION.....	25
2.2.1 <i>Anti "non-place" communication</i> .....	26
2.2.2 <i>Sustainability indicators</i> .....	27
2.2.3 <i>Municipal Environmental Management Systems (EMS)</i> .....	29
2.2.4 <i>Local environmental charters</i> .....	31
2.2.5 <i>City strategic planning</i> .....	31
2.2.6 <i>Environmental reporting</i> .....	32
2.2.7 <i>Media</i> .....	33
2.2.8 <i>Eco-labelling</i> .....	34
2.2.9 <i>Events</i> .....	35
2.2.10 <i>Business parks</i> .....	35
<b>3 ADVANTAGES OF PROMOTING A GREEN CITY.....</b>	<b>37</b>
3.1 EXPECTED COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND POTENTIAL RESULTING LONG-TERM BENEFITS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT.....	37
3.1.1 <i>Public-private partnerships around environmental issues</i> .....	37
3.1.2 <i>The advantages of a better communication to the local community</i> .....	39
3.1.3 <i>The anticipation of future greener demand and requirements</i> .....	41
3.2 LIMITS.....	42
3.2.1 <i>Place competition: a critic of the comparative advantages' theory</i> .....	42
3.2.2 <i>More inequalities at all levels</i> .....	42
3.2.3 <i>Internal communication: waiting for a real social participation</i> .....	43
3.2.4 <i>The fundamental differences between public and private entities. The limits of the market</i> ...	44
3.3 ALTERNATIVES.....	45
3.3.1 <i>More interventionism of the national states</i> .....	45
3.3.2 <i>Networking as the alternative to place competition</i> .....	46
<b>DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>49</b>

# **“Advantages of integrating environmental communication into urban marketing strategies – consequent potential improvements on the city’s physical environment”.**

## **INTRODUCTION AND LOGIC OF THE REPORT.**

Cities concentrate activities and people, and are thus the most important threat to the ecosystems. There are many policies today that strive to make the city become more environmentally friendly and sustainable. Still the impact is huge, and the improvements are counterbalanced by the cities’ growth, likely to increase their global impact even more. Once again in the environmental field, there is a kind of gap between economic development –a priori, because unsustainable-, that is the fruit of private actors, and social and environmental protection, which is rather of public concern.

Yet it’s been noticed for many years that cities in the western world were more and more managed like companies. There actually has been a shift from a managerial approach to an entrepreneurial approach, leading to growth policies. Within this new order, marketing appears as the major driving force of cities’ economic development. That’s why this aspect will be emphasised as the main tool and also the most visible feature of urban entrepreneurialism (T. Hall, P. Hubbard 1998: p29).

Such a management focusing on the economic side may neglect the social or environmental aspects. Furthermore, “the contradiction between the requirements of the urban economic change in a context of international competition, the requirements of an urban development ensuring the social cohesion and fulfilling the criteria for sustainable development appear as critical questions to solve” (C. Jaccoud, M. Bassand, M. Schuler: 1996, p38). The ambition of this thesis is to investigate one way of addressing this issue. Hence, the place of the environment within this new order is the main concern of this paper.

If a comparison is made between the evolution of environmental concerns within companies for a few decades, and the situation in cities, some interesting ideas and parallels can be drawn. Companies, in industry notably, have been forced, both by the law and by the market, to integrate environmental constraints into their product design, production processes, communication, etc. This has eventually led to actual improvements from an environmental point of view, although there is still a lot to do. Moreover, in many cases taking into account the environment has become cost-effective and is seen as a competitive advantage for companies, mainly through their relationships with certain stakeholders.

The main objective of this paper is to investigate whether a similar scenario could be applied to cities, which are competing to attract either investors, companies, residents or tourists. This interurban competition as well as growth policies have recently forced cities to market themselves in order to remain at their level at least, and even often grow.

Can we thus imagine that they use the environment as a “selling point”, through real improvements on the field first, and then a communication of this consideration for the environment. In this field of city advertising and marketing, the environment actually appears as one of the theme a city can work on.

In short, if a city displays a green image and acts on its environment to improve it, we can wonder whether the city would gain advantages in terms of image, investment, etc. We can also wonder if eventually the environment would necessarily benefit from such policies. Those are the main issues this thesis will address. This paper will also try to answer other related question, including: Why would the demand be interesting in such a positioning? Are there any risks for the city? To what extent this theme of environment, as represented and advertised, would profit the city, especially when compared with the usual (fiscal, locational, etc) assets? What means and tool can be used in order to make a city known in a green way? At last,

communication to internal actors will be considered, as it is where marketing in general, and “environmental marketing” particularly are likely to bring the greater benefits.

More generally, it’s a matter of knowing whether the market –but a particular market here- can solve environmental problems, and if it can, to what extent. That’s why the system itself will be questioned, since there are many reasons to fear such a competition and an entrepreneurial management of places, which are not just like goods.

This paper aims at investigating the possibilities and opportunities for cities to play the environment as an asset for their development. This might sound like an economic centred work, which it actually is not. Accepting the fact that misleading advertising is impossible in urban management and marketing (because it is a very short term activity), it is likely that municipalities choosing to work the environmental theme will eventually take measures to reduce their impact on the environment. The main underlying objective is therefore to analyse whether such a market-based system can lead to real improvements on the field. A parallel is drawn with industries that have followed a similar scheme for about 2 decades. However the specificities of public management are considered.

In a first section, the paper will try to explain how entrepreneurial the system of city management is nowadays. For this purpose, the context, actors and history of city’s entrepreneurship and competition will be addressed. Then the features of urban marketing in particular, with all its facets (image, communication notably), will be addressed. At last the place of the environment within such activities will be sorted out and stated.

The second section deals specifically with environmental communication. The companies’ case will be reviewed, as the thesis main hypothesis rests partly on the success of some of them to really work towards environmental sustainability while maintaining social and economic benefits. Cities’ environmental communication will be explained thereafter and compared that of private sector.

In a third section, the advantages of promoting a greener city will be analysed, from an economic and environmental point of view. The limits to such advantages will be discussed, and alternatives will be proposed, as an answer to the current system’s limits.

The communication and marketing of cities around the environment will be the central theme of the thesis. As for the attractiveness of cities, urban tourism will be voluntarily be omitted.

As for the environment specifically, it will be mentioned throughout the paper, especially in the two last parts, but won’t be detailed, since it’s beside the scope of the report. It’s actually often talked about the environment as an image : a “green image”, expressing the fact that a city displays its concern for a good environment. What is meant by that is that the city takes measures (or sometimes promotes something that is not done on the field) to reduce its impact on the environment (land taking, air, water, or soils pollution, waste production, etc). Considering the questions the paper will address, there is no need to review in detail all the impacts a city can have on its surrounding (and also internal) environment. Nor is it necessary to review the technical solutions to remedy to this. Instead, the report will address the (global) impact of growth, entrepreneurial municipal policies, and eventually propose ideas to reduce it: either by introducing the environment into those strategies, either by implementing alternatives.

To illustrate the reasoning, a case study will appear in the section devoted to city’s communication on the environment. The city of Montpellier in Southern France has been chosen for this purpose. Montpellier is a city that marketed itself very early, displaying its educational and high-tech vocation, but also its nice living environment. This choice thus appeared to be relevant to the issues and scope of the study. However, no empirical work has been carried out there, that gives answers to the questions raised, concerning the advantages (social, economic and for the environment) of marketing a green city notably. The information gathered for this case study comes mainly from internet sources and interviews with persons in charge with certain city’s services.

# 1 URBAN STRATEGIC (ENTREPRENEURIAL) MANAGEMENT.

## 1.1 Background

### 1.1.1 History of place marketing

Place marketing mostly concerns formerly industrialised countries, where it is a rather ancient phenomenon (Pigeon 1994: p69). People's settlement has been encouraged for centuries, by various means. Ward (1996) identifies five dominant campaigns throughout the history of cities' representation and selling (A. Jonas, D. Wilson 1999 : p39).

In Sweden for example, Finnish peasants were offered tax incentives to settle in Värmland as far back as the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Since then, it has been the case for all the new areas discovered by Europeans, which needed to be populated. Land at that time was promoted, advertised, and sold, e.g., in North America as early as the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is also in North America that the first modern campaigns of place marketing were launched, during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These campaigns, targeting Europe, were developed mostly by American railroads companies, States and private agencies, as communications between Europe and the USA improved. At the same time, the situation was really different in Europe and other regions, where the urban system was already well established. Whereas in North America, towns were just being founded, especially those located along the newly built railroads. Thus there was a real struggle between those towns to get a train-station, a prison, a state university, or the status of county town for instance. This competition in the US was expressed through diverse promotional publicity, which was an integral part of the creation and development of urban settlements. For the biggest cities, emphasis was already made on culture, architecture, and urban improvement.

Meanwhile, this kind of place marketing was far less common in Europe, except for some particular cases such as tourism resorts or residential suburbs. S. Ward has analysed how such places were advertised in Britain from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At that time, seaside resorts were municipalities likely to grow very rapidly, thanks to the development of railroads and tourism. Rail companies were then associated to the publicity, but municipalities themselves generally conducted the campaigns. Some mountain resorts, such as Chamonix in France, were also advertised very early with the help of the rail company. Suburbs, especially the estates built around London along the newly built "tube", were advertised from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in a similar way, following the American example, such as it happened in Chicago 20 years before. Later, industrial towns started to advertise in such a way (second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century for North America and late 19<sup>th</sup> for UK). The target groups were then potential companies that were likely to be attracted by local initiatives. This kind of marketing however was slowed down by more centralised policies of industrial locations, except in the USA. Nowadays, this national allocation of industry is more or less dying out in the western countries, leaving the local competition to determine their distribution.

The most recent form of city marketing strives to sell the "post-industrial" city. This tendency is directly associated with the loss of industrial employment since the 1970's, and thus was observed in most of the western countries. Certain cities, such as New York and Cleveland, were close to bankruptcy during the economic crisis. Therefore the need to market the city has been very strong, as has been the need to convey a reinvented image of the city, reflecting its new status of place of consumption rather than place of production. This marketing of the "post industrial city" appears to be more diverse in its features than the previous one, trying to attract businesses and tourists, while displaying a compliance with residents' needs. It is considerably inspired by the modern methods of product marketing, and has gradually become professional and appropriate to places.

Moreover, this last phase has been widely and rapidly spread all over the globe (T. Hall, P. Hubbard 1998 : pp31-53). It is this most recent form of representation and promotion that will be addressed in the following chapters.

### 1.1.2 The context: competition and growth policies.

In a more and more global and interrelated world, competition between different places (regions, cities etc) has been stressed considerably. Interurban competition at all levels originated for the main part in the US and spread all over the globe. It is now considered by many as an inescapable phenomenon. (A. Jonas, D. Wilson 1999 : pp 18-23). The context in which competition developed has been the profound changes in the labour and products processes, the increased need for services, the changing cultural styles and modes of social regulation. All those upheavals have contributed to modify the role of cities as well as their spatial forms and, therefore, their physical environment (A. Jonas, D. Wilson 1999 : p3).

A few decades ago, there was still a clear division of labour. Manufacturing production was taking place in the industrial cities of the industrialised countries, whereas command functions and major services remained in the largest cities. But for the past 30 years, a real globalisation of production and consumption has altered the cities' functional role. Manufacturing production has been allowed worldwide because of the reduced costs of transport and the lower requirements for workers' qualifications. Relocation has thus been very common, towards areas where labour costs were lower, at the expense of the old industrial areas. New industrial (high-tech) sectors also have different requirements and are likely to settle in other places, e.g., smaller cities, helped by lower costs and facilitated means of communication. Hence, the greater mobility of activities and capital allows various locational options for business and events, thus opportunities for cities. The major stakes for cities are then to catch as much as possible of these flux (Pigeon, p69). But changes are quick, and cities need to reposition themselves very often (T. Hall, P. Hubbard 1998 : pp55-57). Even world cities no longer have a monopoly on command functions, and thus have to compete with others to benefit from the post-industrial economy. Another factor that has reinforced this competition in the US and in Europe has been the decentralisation and the process of regionalization or localisation in some countries such as Spain, UK, or France (D. Gibbs, A. Jonas 2000: p303). In France particularly, the decentralisation during the early 1980's gave much more power to municipalities, allowing them to define their own development policies.

Other causes that might have strengthened the competition are related to the economic recession that started around 1973: the decline of employment forced places to compete harder to attract activities in short supply.

Many authors consequently talk about a *new urban order* (T. Hall, P. Hubbard 1998 : p56; A. Jonas, D. Wilson 1999 : p42), in which competition has increased and is still increasing. This phenomenon is seen throughout the capitalist world, and there is a consensus between different countries, political parties, and ideologies that cities can reap positive benefits from taking an entrepreneurial stance to economic development (D. Harvey 1989: p4).

This competition between cities implies a new approach of local governance. The term *new urban politics* is often used to define the shift from the previous model to the new one (T. Hall, P. Hubbard 1998 : p13; A. Jonas, D. Wilson 1999 : p23). Previous policies led by local governments were more welfare and social oriented ("*managerial approach*"), while the new policies aim to encourage local development and economic growth through making the area attractive to major employers ("*entrepreneurial approach*"). Their overall goal is to increase employment, income, trade and investment in the city.

To achieve these goals and be able to stand against competitors, cities are being promoted as any other product in the capitalist world. The main targeted groups are businesses or industrial firms, corporate and divisional headquarters, investment capital, sports teams, tourists, conventioners, or residents. Effective place marketing is actually often seen as essential for the city to avoid stagnation or even decline (T. Hall, P. Hubbard 1998 : p58). Another, more recent form of place marketing has been the marketing applied to urban strategic planning as, together with urban marketing, there are often actions of transformation that are taken in the city.

### 1.1.3 Actors involved : a new private/public consensus.

As we have seen, local growth is very often the main goal and perspective for local authorities and local businesses. Actually, growth provides local taxes that help localities to expand their welfare programs, create employment, and hence enhances the resident's of living. Both private and public sectors might therefore benefit from their city's growth.

In terms of market, the municipality, and all the actors involved in its development, can be seen as a supplier (of land, public facilities, etc.). On the other side thus lies the demand, which can be divided into two components: external and internal demand (P. Noisette, F. Vallérugo 1995: p 127).

**External demand:** People and companies looking for a new place to live, work, sell. This demand is influenced by the inter-urban competition and in turn influences it.

**Internal demand:** Economic and social agents living in the city, i.e., inhabitants (as consumers, residents stricto sensu, and electorate) and companies. Some of those actors are also part of the "growth coalition".

The various actors initiating growth policies, part of a more or less united coalition, form the *urban governance*, which is much more than the only *urban government* (D. Harvey 1989: p4).

T. Hall and P. Hubbard identify 8 main players in the thus formed coalitions: the city government itself, property interests, rentiers, utility groups, universities, business groups, trade unions and the local media. There is therefore a kind of consensus between businesses and local politics to promote their city in order to make it grow. There are actually partnerships –often informal- between the public and private sectors (T. Hall, P. Hubbard 1998). H. Molotch (1976) defines such partnerships as "growth coalitions", that are groups encompassing all actors materially interested in the growth of their city, often formed to carry out specific projects. This "growth coalition" is a central notion in "urban entrepreneurialism". The effectiveness of those coalitions, i.e., their ability to act, usually depends on their ability to convince the population, who is electing the local government.

The following simple figure (fig.1) shows how the internal demand (residents and citizens here) and the supply (local public authorities only here) interact with each other.

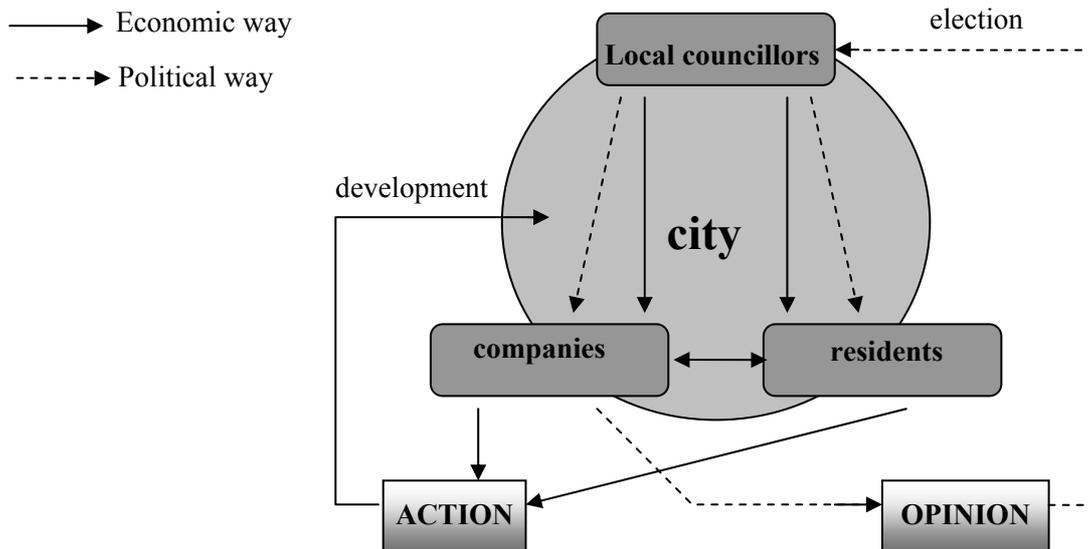


Figure 1: Political and economic management of a city.

- The power of **local governments and administrations** in this respect relies mostly in their ability to facilitate and co-ordinate growth policies (D. Harvey 1989: p6). However they can also directly act on their territory mainly through tax abatements to companies, changing planning regulation and financing of infrastructural projects to facilitate activities and transport (A. Jonas, D. Wilson 1999: p59). Must be distinguished from elected persons or teams, whose politics is likely to be changed by new elections, the municipal administrative bureaucracy, that often acts as a stabilising force in entrepreneurial regimes, whatever the political tendencies are.

- **Chambers of commerce** are also often in charge of urban boosterism<sup>1</sup>, especially in the US where they are very active, either on their own or as the dominant member of coalitions (A. Jonas, D. Wilson 1999: p47). Chambers of commerce are generally made up of local financiers, industrialists, business leaders, and property developers in the US, but are more public sector oriented in Europe.

- **Development agencies**: they often depend directly on the municipal services. Most of the time they play a role in combining and coordinating the different initiatives and energies, and are therefore a key actor in the city development area. Can also be associated private consultants.

- The **local community** (i.e., residents) is also a major actor. The citizens are the workforce of a given city. They are the people whose quality of life is likely to be affected by the growth of the city and they are the ones who elect local politicians. Therefore, they are also the ones that may oppose the expansion of their city, as environmental pressure groups would, acting as “antigrowth coalitions”. The support of local community to development projects often involves a strong identity or feeling of belonging to the place. The involvement of this category into the city development, especially in the strategic planning stage, is more and more considered as essential to such plans’ success (social participation).

- There are also real business coalitions, generally made up of **locally dependent businesses**. Local companies can play a significant role in the city development. But they don’t always have interests in doing so. Moreover, they are only economic agents, and have no civic role.

- Other -secondary- actors can be religious, military or educational institutions, research or administrative departments, local labour organisations (building sector mostly), political parties, social movements, etc. Even though their individual perspectives and goals are different, they all can play a significant role as local boosters that have a stake in making their city grow (D. Harvey 1989: p7).

When it comes to communication from cities, the actors in charge can be diverse as well:

- Simply the mayor her/himself in certain small towns.
- Often a department that is either under the political hierarchy authority or under the functional hierarchy authority.
- A consultant company.
- Media that are asked to or propose to report on the city’ actions, news, etc.

## 1.2 Urban marketing: a business tool applied to places.

### 1.2.1 Introduction to place marketing.

According to T. Hall (1998), Marketing has been the main driving force of urban economic development since the 1980’s. Messages and scopes have changed since the early times, and cities nowadays are rather

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<sup>1</sup> Means “promotion”.

marketed (search for making the supply - i.e., the city- better fit the demand –i.e., mobile companies or potential residents, tourists) than sold as it has been the case in the beginning.

Marketing is often reduced to techniques of manipulation of consumers or voters, especially when applied to public management. Such examples can actually be found in everyday life where it seems that the only point is to substitute consumption for any other goal. Marketing was actually born in the merchant sector in order to solve companies' problems of overproduction (J-Y. Toussaint, M. Zimmermann 1998: pp113-120). This is what can be called "downstream marketing", or tactical means only aiming at choosing ways to distribute and promote goods or services in order to sell them. "Upstream marketing" is a more integrated strategy that attempts to identify sectors and goods that are growing and profitable for the company, with a good value for the money. This distinction can also be applied to the case of cities.

Marketing however can also have wider perspectives and more "virtuous" goals.

First, marketing no longer aims at forcing people to buy any goods, but also addresses the problems of appropriateness between supply and demand, and of connection between social exchanges and the production of value. It thus gains a theoretical dimension that places it ahead of the economic theories it refers to.

Second, marketing has no end in itself. Its purpose is to be at the service of the organisation that uses it; yet it's commonly admitted (and sometimes forgotten) that the organisation's interests can't be in contradiction with that of its customers. Marketing must then seek out both the organisation's development and the customer's satisfaction, since both are interrelated. There can therefore be social or environmental objectives, in which case we talk about societal<sup>2</sup> marketing (P. Noisette, F. Vallérugo 1996: pp113-125).

Public services marketing emerged in the early 1970's thanks to this compatibility between marketing and general interest. It's then to the citizen-consumer, through the legislator and his behaviour, to define the limits and the collective objectives (consumerism). The marketing of public management is a kind of societal marketing since it's integrating collective goals and analyses the long-term consequences of its choices. Furthermore its goals are not profit, but the pursuit of general interest. Public service marketing therefore stands between the authorities and the market economy, as shown in figure 1.

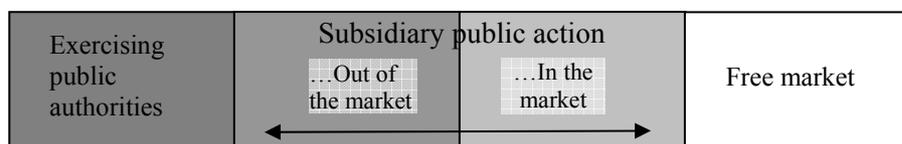


Figure 2: where public services marketing stands. Source P. Noisette, F. Vallérugo p119

Still there is no doubt that marketing has no meaning apart from a commercial relation. Is the relation between local authorities, the territory they manage, and land users just commercial? The association marketing/territory is indeed, a priori, problematic.

When it comes to urban marketing strictly speaking, one can define it as "the analysis, planning, implementation, and control of programs conceived by the urban authority". Its objectives are both to better meet the internal demand of residents and activities and to strengthen in short and long term the quality and competitiveness of the city within its competitive background (P. Noisette, F. Vallérugo 1996: p142).

The main differences with goods or service marketing are:

- The partition of the various target groups
- Equity, which is essential to respect
- The necessary reformulation of price variables in order to include non-monetary elements such as access to public facilities (J. Bouinot, B. Bermils 1995 : p150).

<sup>2</sup> Societal marketing is defined as a marketing that takes into account long term effects and collective interests, whether they are social or environmental. Hence it aims not only at better know the needs and desires of the targeted markets, but also preserve or improve the consumers' welfare.

Haider, in T. Hall and P. Hubbard (1998) distinguish 5 phases: analysing marketing opportunities, investigating and choosing target markets, designing marketing strategies, planning marketing programmes, and organising and implementing these plans. The overall idea is to display the distinctive advantage of the city, through promoting the city's own values and representation and fixing attractive incentives. What urban boosterism and marketing aim at is to promote a certain picture of the city, by conveying existent, recreated, and reimagined images and ideas (A. Jonas, D. Wilson 1999 : p40).

## 1.2.2 Image and representation.

The image has dominated the urban marketing scene for a long time. Yet it's only one of the aspects of marketing theories. But cities produce a lot of images and exist as much from being imagined as well as being lived in.

How we understand, view, and conceptualise the city determines how it is represented to us. This idea people hold of a city thus depends on how they perceive it, through their own experience and through all the media that may mention this city.

Three dynamics constitute the image of a city (P. Noisette, F. Vallérugo pp215-250):

- the city belongs to time and man's memory. Its collective memory has been gradually acquired over time and history. What remains are customs, monuments, etc.
- The city is made up of its own experience and imagination. It's a very complex reality, difficult to grasp, and is moreover subject to our own subjectivity.
- The city is itself and a bit of all others. Each city actually has something unique, a character and an identity that's possible to describe and talk about. Yet when communicated, cities all seem to be alike. They all represent themselves as an archetype of any city.

From a marketing point of view, the most important is the image as a mental representation. It's being built all along the connections between people and a city, and is then the sum of three components:

- Real image (objective: what the city actually is)
- Acquired image (subjective: how it is perceived)
- Desired image (what people would like it to look like)

Hence it is mostly the way the city is talked about (by people, in the schoolbooks, literature, TV, newspapers, etc.) that constructs its image that is positive or negative, clear or vague, etc.

Of course, as a city is not a simple object, but on the contrary a multifaceted system. It's thus very difficult to perceive its image.

The representation of a city, besides the city's reality and people's views, depends on the regime of representation, which is defined by J. Short as a "the more general context in which particular forms of urban representation take on specific meaning" (A. Jonas, D. Wilson 1999 : p38). The development of capitalism constitutes the basic situation that involves a new regime of representation, eventually modifying urban structures and hierarchies.

Within such a new order then, cities seek to represent themselves in a favourable light, creating and imagining new images. This is especially true for cities whose image is somewhat negative or imprecise to the residents, investors, or visitors. The public image they count on often corresponds to the current needs and fashion: search for amenities, a pleasant living environment, a better access to means of transportation, a lower cost of living, etc. (Pigeon 1994: p71).

### 1.2.2.1 Image making and image policies:

It is commonly admitted that there has been a crisis in urban representation, especially because of the transformed spatial organisation of capitalism. According to their previous and current situation, size, dominant activity, ambition, etc. cities attempt to represent themselves in different ways. J. Short points out that the "reimaginings" of cities are a kind of compromise between what businesses expect from the city and the residents' expectations, since local politicians have to be elected by them.

But image making is tricky, and can have adverse effects. It's actually impossible to conjure up an image different from reality. This would rapidly turn against the city, eventually discrediting all its messages. The image has to stay close to reality and to the resident's actual feelings about it (P. Noisette, F. Vallérugo pp222-243).

It's possible to draw a parallel between a city's image and a **brand name**. This brand expresses the values anyone attributes to the city. In fact, when a city's name is mentioned, it triggers memory and feelings. It's moreover even possible to reinforce its fame through communication techniques, just like a brand name. The city's image is then very useful in order to strengthen its place in the interurban competition arena, as the city's identification in the markets (P. Noisette, F. Vallérugo pp234-235).

An **image policy** is the necessary framework to coordinate such practices of image making or reinforcement. It aims at creating a context in which the decision making process takes place, even though it doesn't necessarily influence this context. It thus generally contributes to the essential phenomena of support and recognition. The main objective is to maintain or improve the city's heritage. An image policy must be organised through three essential concerns:

- To control the connections between the image and the actual quality of the city.
- To direct and conform the specific communication (define common landmarks and targets)
- Means and control used as a medium.

An image policy must consider that residents don't have the same view of the city as external people likely to be attracted by it. Besides, there is an image the authorities would like to promote. The latter must be close to the true face of the city, but can play with people's views. Figure 3 below shows where and how such a policy intervenes in the different components of an image and image-making or influencing (P. Noisette, F. Vallérugo, pp244-252).

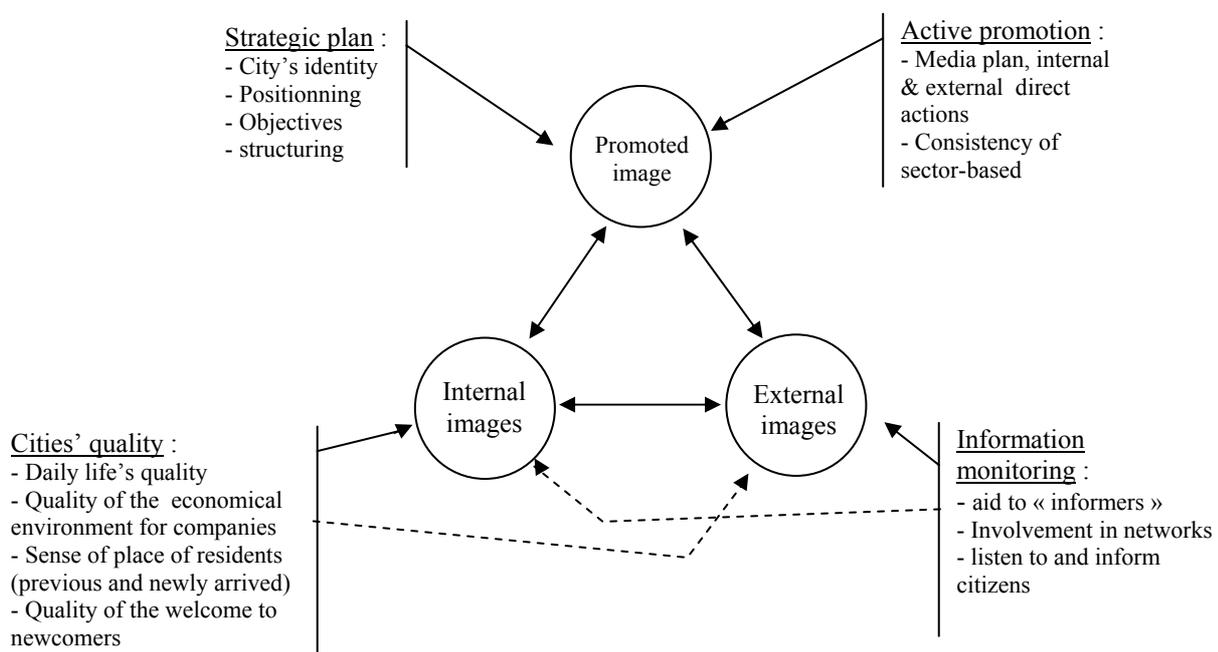


Figure 3: where the image policy acts. Source: P. Noisette, F. Vallérugo p248.

Finally, image marketing is the most common means used in city marketing, despite the gap that may exist between the reality of the city's situation and its (re)made image. It is actually necessary for a city to be associated to images, in a world where visual media play a major role. Cities that lack an image (indifference) or that are associated with quite bad images need more than others to reconstruct their image through advertising campaigns.

1.2.2.2 Themes worked:

Generally, cities attempt to produce an image that reflects a lively and dynamic place, especially the centre: easily accessible in terms of infrastructure, ideal for businesses. The importance of the quality of life, notably the environment, seems to be expanding in image making, as Burgess already noted in 1982 (T. Hall, P. Hubbard 1998 : p61). Other advantages promoted by advertising include post-modern architecture, festivals, or high-tech industries. Globally, it can be noted that space is represented in rather commonplace ways: crossroads, maps, or arranged urban landscape. These representations often are not specific to any city, making this city good for everybody looking at these images (M. Rosemberg-Lasorne 1997).

J. Short distinguishes four favourite themes of representation (A. Jonas, D. Wilson 1999 : pp43-53):

-The “**world city**” status: London, New York, Sydney, etc. These are international opened cities. They already have command functions, but compete with each other to gain more. The representation they want people to have of them are cities where money can be made (business city), where important events happen (conferences, spectacles, Olympic Games, etc.), and where there is a concentration of culture (art galleries, theatres...).

-The “**once industrial city**”: Manchester, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, Liege, Barcelona, Gothenburg, etc. The challenge here is mostly to build a cleaner image of the city, as de-industrialisation occurs. Such cities want to get rid of their bad, polluted, and working-class image. This includes their wish to be seen as places of consumption rather than production, and places of leisure instead of only work. This is likely to have great effects on the physical environment, since such a renewed image has to be supported by real progress on the field. At the same time, the industrial culture is to be preserved as a distinctive identity and proof of *savoir-faire*.

-The “**business city**”: This is one of the most common and used message that consists in representing the city as a place to do good business. Selling points include the presence of transnational companies, business indicators, or a high-rank in terms of business attributed by independent surveys. All this is usually associated with other images, such as nature, technology, festivals, historic places, etc. The following table shows the main themes that are used for city representation in the business media:

Business oriented	Pro-business political climate (partnerships)	Business assistance programs Sound fiscal policies Fiscal incentives for industry
	Ideal workforce	Young, well educated, skilled, and hard working work force Concentration of educational institutions Good labour relations, strong work ethic
	High-technology	Concentration of high tech industries, partnerships with research centres and universities
	Central location	Close to markets, border city, coast city, central crossroads location
	Solid Infrastructure	Airport, highways, telecommunications
	Healthy local economy	Economic growth, dynamism, rising employment rate
Quality of life oriented	High quality of life	<b>Good natural environment, natural amenity (lake, river, mountain...)</b> , mild weather, health services, low cost of living, friendliness
	Distinct life style advantages	Cultural and recreational activities (museum, opera, theatre festivals, professional sports teams etc) Historical heritage, city’ specific charm (e.g. old centre)

Source: Short and Kim (1998)

The **Cultural city** is a final major theme worked by many. It is indeed very attractive for a city to have art galleries, opera halls, museums, festivals, etc. Each and everyone of these cultural attributes might help the city reimagine itself as a world class city, a city for elite. To this selective culture can be added more popular forms, that can be efficient as well. Festivals, carnivals, shops, nightclubs, amusement parks are also good assets that can influence the city's representation. The ethnic mix of a city, such as New York's or Toronto's, is often highlighted in the representation of such cities as a priceless wealth. Sport is another important part of popular culture. Professional sport teams, when successful, provide great advertising for their home cities. Football in Europe, for example, is likely to bring an otherwise unknown town to millions of viewers. The representation of the city might also change, since the sport is often associated with a vibrant popular culture and with the dynamism of the whole population cheering for its team.

Most of the municipal authorities are actually aware of the importance of their city's image, especially in a world where communication and media lead. That's why they all try to maintain the image they have acquired over time or improve it when necessary. The chosen themes are often associated with the same place and are in any case recurrent. The environment is only one facet. The image of the city that is being marketed often represents partly what the city really is, but it also corresponds to what the boosters would like it to look like and to what their global objectives are. There are many different ways of communicating such visions, which are presented below.

### 1.2.3 Local communication.

#### 1.2.3.1 Regular media.

Practically, the means used to disclose the image and message are varied, although most of them are often printed on paper. That can be in city guides, glossy brochures, fact sheets, advertisement in major business or travel journals, etc. (T. Hall, P. Hubbard 1998 : p 61).

Images and text can also be shared by posting, radio advertising, TV ads, videos, internet site, etc.

City marketing also uses logos and slogans (as the city's name can be associated to a brand name).

After the 1980's, many previous city arms were replaced by new logos that represented the code of the moment in communication more than the originality of the place. They usually displayed a simplistic symbolism (a blue, oblique line for enthusiasm; meanders for a river flowing through the city, etc.). Many cities have chosen other ways since then, by displaying the main character of the city (even though it's not unique at all), updating their old arms, or by associating the logo to the city plan (i.e., to the municipal authorities' project rather than to the city itself). The logo actually gets a certain recognition from people and investors or companies. It's a symbolic entity in city marketing, which often marks the shift toward new objectives, or simply an updating and adaptation to a new context or new trends (P. Noisette, F. Vallérugo, p234-240).

The slogan is also an effective tool for name recognition. Two major themes are recurrent in advertising literature: business and quality of life. The following examples of American cities' slogans illustrate this recurrence:

**Business:** "Strategically located for global business" (Atlanta, GA), "the city of choice for business" (Dallas, TX), "Moving business in the right direction; the best of the best" (Phoenix, AZ).

**Quality of life:** "a cultural and environment adventure" (Denver, CO), "Your kind of place" (Louisville, KY), "Sun and fun; you never outgrow it" (Orlando, FL), "Your place in history" (St Augustine, FL).

Many use the word "business" as they are good locales to do business, while other cities with a great natural environment or a cultural or historical heritage use words such as sun, sea, adventure, history, etc. (J. Short and Y-H. Kim in T. Hall, P. Hubbard 1998 : p61).

It is obvious that the mediums used to promote cities are actually more or less the same as those used for any consumer goods. However, beside this regular means of advertising, are some mediums peculiar to the city, and also particularly efficient, including events, local residents, and companies notably.

### 1.2.3.2 Events:

Sporting events, congresses, exhibits, festivals, carnivals, etc. play an important role in cities' attractiveness and energy. They have thus become essential factors of cities' developmental strategies. Such events can be permanent, recurrent, or occasional. What makes them successful urban events is their appropriateness to the city and the fact that they are an integrated part of a wider strategy.

To be successful, an event must therefore combine:

- A thematic approach
- A spatial expression
- A collusion with the daily life and atmosphere of the city.

An event is the occasion of meeting and mixing. Meeting, since an event is often a place where one has to be present, to be seen. Mixing, since an event is almost always the fruit of a synergy between local and external actors, thus a place for human and economic exchanges.

An event appears as a favoured tool to express the city's identity and affirms its image. Moreover, it's a good means of redistributing money at the local scale. It can work in large cities as well as in small towns (P. Noisette, F. Vallérugo, pp326-347).

### 1.2.3.3 Local residents and companies as ambassadors:

Each resident is a passive carrier of an image of his city, by the ways he's talking about it notably. Residents can also become active carriers, as long as they are proud of their city. This is also true for professionals (hotel trade, representatives, bankers, etc.) or companies. Consequently all of those actors become ambassadors of their city, and it this phenomenon is likely to snowballs rapidly.

These phenomena and effects are likely to reach numerous and complementary targets, at a ridiculously low price compared to a communication campaign. So they are a very cheap and efficient way of promoting the city. Furthermore it provides an image of solidarity and collective mobilisation that reinforces the dynamism perceived from outside.

That implies certainly that those actors are satisfied with their city, and that their sense of place is strong enough.

Finally, this local communication has to follow the communication plan below (P. Noisette, F. Vallérugo, p263):

- Identify the targets
- Define the objectives (quantified when possible) and conceive the message
- Choose the means and budget
- Define in detail the promotional "mix"
- Launch and co-ordinate the actions
- Evaluate the results.

## 1.2.4 Marketing as a tool for city strategic planning.

### 1.2.4.1 City strategic planning:

City strategic planning firstly aims at developing the city's ability and first place in business, improving its situation within a larger context in terms of infrastructure, amenities, etc. and also strengthening the residents' sense of place and of being part of the plan.

It's the expression of a political will, and arises from a social group and a dialogue between the actors. Usually, it tries to preserve a certain continuity with the past.

There are two main differences between city strategic planning and urban planning strictly speaking:

- City strategic planning is more flexible, so that it might integrate opportunities that were not planned.
- Both private and public actors are involved.

It's usually a long term-plan, one that sets general aims and targets (strategic points and major areas of interventions).

Barcelona was one of the first city to practice this integrated urbanism and development in the mid-

1980's. The main objective was to assert itself as a world city. The city first needed a better dialogue with its residents, second a structuring project to push it in front of the international stage: the Olympic Games. At the same time, Barcelona has improved the quality of its neighbourhoods, of the seafront, and built high-level facilities. The success of this avant-gardist case also provides a good example of real improvements enabled thanks to strategic planning and marketing (T. Hall, P. Hubbard 1998 pp241-253).

#### 1.2.4.2 Marketing and urban strategic planning:

Some authors such as Muriel Rosemberg argue that urban marketing can't be reduced to a promotional process. She explains that place marketing has to rest on actual actions on the city. Her study of four French cities (among them Montpellier) how their marketing is related to the city strategic planning. She also points out that without this marketing throughout the planning process (genesis, publication, execution), such plans couldn't be achieved. Yet it's been observed that it was difficult, not to say impossible, for marketing techniques (communication, advertising, image making, positioning, etc.) to promote a city in an efficient way if the services and quality actually offered by the city don't confirm the fame and messages conveyed. For diverse reasons, actions aiming at improving the city environment, when communicated, have better chances to succeed and at the same time provide an impetus for the city's image. The connection between marketing and urban strategic planning is therefore easy to grasp. Urban promotion bears in this case more functions than just attracting investors and people (M. Rosemberg-Lasorne 1997).

All along the process (thinking, implementation, etc.), the strategic plan is being marketed to various actors, mostly internal stakeholders. Marketing is indeed very useful in this context, for the following reasons:

Marketing can be used as a tool to serve the local democracy. It can indeed contribute to reinforce the relation of residents with their city, this "community 'we feeling'" Molotch identifies (1976: p314). The city strategic planning actually aims at creating a global community around feelings, beliefs, and interests, and is thus of public interest. Residents should then be its ultimate beneficiaries. This process of strategy definition usually involves the citizens, who are asked to think about their city's long term future. Moreover, this city strategic planning is an endogenous process that rests on all its internal energies. Hence everybody has something to bring to support the plan. Moreover, a strategic plan is a success the moment it manages to restore confidence among the actors, which is why residents need to be involved from the beginning.

However there are some problems brought on by the involvement of residents. First the techniques used are rarely effective and that involvement is often nothing but a facade. Moreover, it's sometimes difficult to convince the population that the plan is neutral and has for main objective to benefit everyone, without any political affairs in the background. Beside, residents often focus on the city's daily problems (parking, cleanliness, etc.) and don't feel concerned with the far future, the competition problems the city faces, its image, etc. Marketing may then to be used by politics to convince people that it's possible to improve the daily situation within a longer term plan, and that a better position of the city will eventually allow them to invest more in people's expectations. Another problem lies in the lack of feeling of citizenship of many people, who think that local development is not their business, that they pay enough taxes, and therefore shouldn't be bothered with such issues.

There are various methods to communicate to residents. First, to the strategic plan is often associated a communication plan, one that uses common means: messages on local TV's or radio stations, travelling exhibits, leaflets, posters, neighbourhood meetings, articles in newspapers, public inquiries, special issue of the municipal newsletter, stickers, T-shirts, graphical charter, internet sites, etc. Second, a permanent structure can be set up, but residents are rarely represented as individuals in such organisations. When it comes to the legal framework around this social participation, it is almost always non-existent (J. Bouinot, B. Bermils 1995: pp 172-173).

Marketing, when used as an "upstream" tool, can help local authorities to define the strategic positioning of the city, through:

- An assessment of the economic and residential locations in the long run and of the appropriateness of the territory to these dynamics
- Benchmarking (comparison with other places)
- A selection of the activities for whose location the city offers advantages (definition of trends of development).

Marketing can, in some cases be an efficient resort when the city's image has suffered from its historical heritage. That's the case for old industrial cities that strive to get rid of their image as dirty and polluted places. "Downstream" marketing in this case is justified, when the reality no longer relates to the image.

Beside, city marketing can contribute to better define the territories and strengthen their identity in a world where places are more and more trivialised. Conveying a particular image (relying on a certain traditional know-how specific to the city for instance) could lead to more specialised cities. Some authors consider that such specialisation is coming up again, as in the "industrial districts" (J-Y. Toussaint, M. Zimmermann 1998: pp113-125).

Urban marketing is then indispensable in city strategic planning. Some even consider that urban marketing does not exist apart from the communication of such plans. In such strategic planning approach, communication is essential to make the relationships between actors easier and to ensure the way the members of the group stay together. A strategic plan becomes official and even awakens to the city only after it's been communicated and made public (M. Rosemberg-Lasorne 1997).

### 1.2.5 Analysis of the system

Based on all the information collected above, this short section will strive to present the model that rules the interactions between the city's actual state, its images and the major actors influencing those interactions.

The following simple mental model shows such a system considering the main internal and external actors and their relations with the city chosen for setting up. The initial thinking around the topic is based on such a model. The idea is that better environmental conditions (thus a higher quality of life – plus welfare in general from the municipality) improve the image of the city, which in turn, first can make the local authorities –satisfied- be willing to do even better (increasing their "willingness"), second attract companies and people that set up there. Those newly set up people and companies bring income to the municipality, which increases even more the willingness, or rather the financial capability of the local authorities. As a result, investment are made and are measures taken to improve the environmental conditions and the quality of life.

The major balancing loops that can be identified are the degradation of the city resulting from a increased economic –industrial- activity (more companies) and an increased population, which make the overall quality of life ("welfare and physical environment") decrease. It's also the image of the city that is affected by such a degradation with all the consequences (less companies and people setting up notably). This image can also be directly affected by the residents' view of their city, when they think, subjectively, that their quality of life has decreased, because of the arrival of many newcomers for instance. That is the dotted arrow.

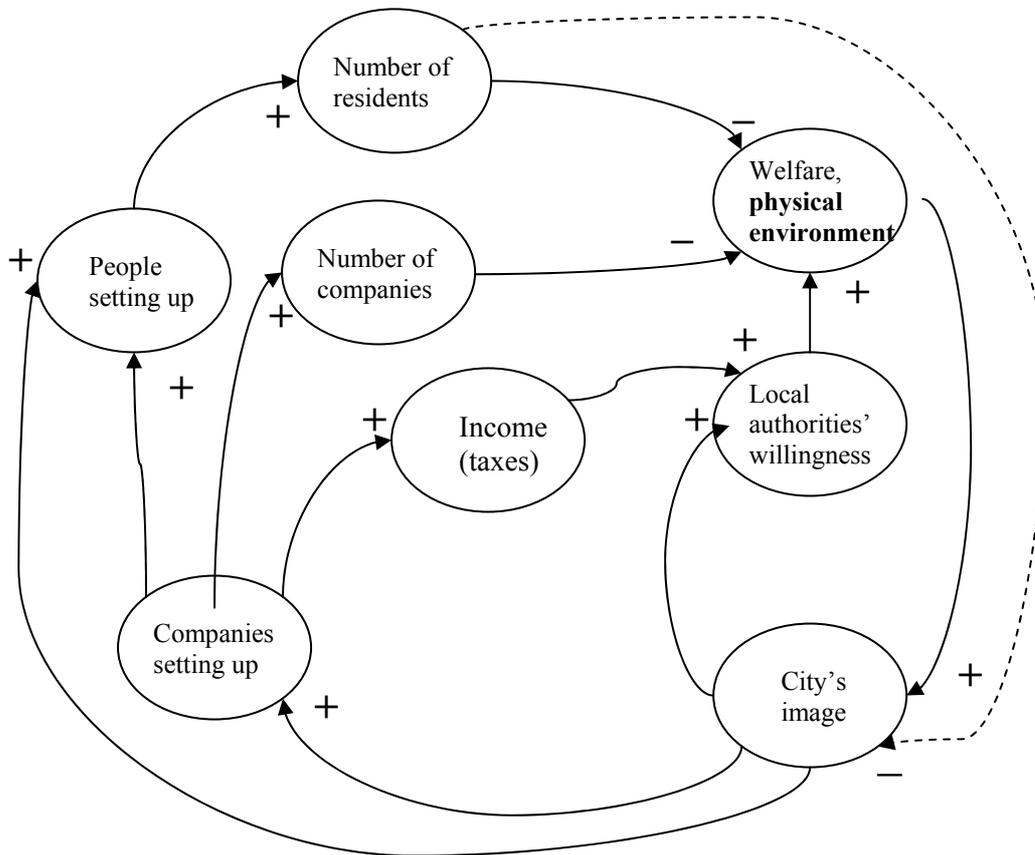


Figure 4: causal loop diagram of the main system analysed.

This causal loop diagram is very simplistic and omits many actions, such as the very complex role of communication and marketing, which influence all actors and states within this model. There would be one more arrow between “local authorities’ willingness” toward “city’s image in case of image making, re-making or communication campaign. But we are rather interested in the role of marketing, which is much more than just changing the image in people’s minds. For instance, marketing strives to change the city’s image and features in the same time, there are actions that are carried out in order to improve the actual situation.

Moreover, the model doesn’t consider the complexity of the image we have explained above. The image is made up of several facets, of which the environment is only one (in comparison with the economic dynamism, the atmosphere, etc), and is defined through several components (external images, internal images, promoted images), each of them depending on several elements. Integrating such a complexity into the model would make it become incomprehensible.

## 1.3 What place for environmental concerns ?

### 1.3.1 People and companies’ usual expectations

What makes the satisfaction of the demand very complex are the various needs and characteristics of the demand. Each actor has different interests and expects different things from the city. Caricaturally, the resident focuses on the state of its street and local services, while the company that wants to set up considers above all the amount of tax allowance the city is willing to give to attract it. Such heterogeneity raises problems with regards to communication.

As we have seen before, two main kinds of demands can be distinguished: the internal and the external demand.

The internal demand comes from the economic and social agents already living in the city. They can be individuals (residents), companies, non-profit organisations, etc. This demand is completely

different from the external one. Residents have often already participated in elections and are thus expecting something from the municipality in line with its electoral program. Companies, just like residents (as they pay local taxes) are entitled to get certain services from the municipality, too.

The external demand encompasses people and companies seeking a new place to live, work or sell. It's thus the demand that interests us the most in this paper, since it's actually "fuelling" the inter-urban competition and will be influenced by it. It's in fact very difficult to define this demand, i.e., the requirements of those actors vis-à-vis the city they are likely to set up in, since it's very diverse.

Within companies, the demand can vary a lot. A service company that looks for central city offices will of course have different expectations than a car company that wants to build a factory. Their demand is mostly related to economic criteria. First the market decides in which country or region it's appropriate for them to set up. Then a place (city) within this region has to be chosen.

Then there are several criteria depending on the enterprise (Do they need raw materials or already processed parts produced in a particular place? Do they need a skilled workforce? Large for production areas? Will there be production activity only or also research and development activities? What kind of communication or transport means are the most suitable to their flows or connections? And so on). Depending upon these needs, the companies will have different requirements:

- Fiscal oriented selection criteria: Sound fiscal policies from the local authorities, fiscal incentives for industries setting up, etc.

- Qualified workforce: The presence of educational institutions, such as university or specialised schools, is a key factor in this case, especially when there will be research activities, or simply when the production requires a certain level of professional skills. There can also be partnerships with research centres and universities.

- Location near transport nodes (and/or crossroad location) when the activity implies an inflow of material and outflow of goods for instance. The presence of highway interchange, train station, airport, etc. is often a determining criterion.

- The economic dynamism of the area is also a key factor. Companies would rather set up in active places, with economic growth and rising employment, than in depressed cities that also lack a good image.

Obviously these selection criteria are above all economic oriented: position within the market, access to infrastructures, fiscal regimes, presence of a skilled workforce. It's interesting indeed to have a look at the "references" the city of Montpellier presents on its website. It's actually the accounts of some executives or directors of important companies recently set up in Montpellier. Among four accounts, none of them makes an allusion neither to an environmental choice nor to the good quality of life of the city. It's only business reasons that are quoted: "*great place to do business*", "*highly qualified workforce and the great support from public authorities*", "*dynamic economic and technological centre*", "*quality of recruitment that we are able to carry out in the region*", etc. It is clear here that environmental issues still have a long way before being a strategic asset for all companies and places, as acknowledges A. Caron who thinks that it's an important asset though (A. Caron 1995: p 66).

The criteria of quality of life, amenities, etc. might come indirectly from the executives who are going to live in the chosen area and city.

It's very difficult to define the demand from people (as potential residents) as well, since it's also very varied. An executive who's transferred to another city expects different things from that city than an unemployed person who's being offered a job there.

For the latter category –people in general- they often don't choose the area: they first go where employment or business opportunities are. But still they can have to choose between several offers. It's mostly the high-ranked executives and the self-employed who can really afford to choose where they want to live and work or who can be a determining factor in their company's choice of location.

In any case, people's selection criteria are fundamentally different from the companies'. First criteria are of course somewhat economic oriented (cost of living, taxes, etc.) but concern above all the quality of the city. Different criteria are taken into consideration:

- Good natural environment, natural amenity (lake, seacoast, river, mountain...), mild weather. The local actors brought together for the Hannover call in February 2000 indeed state that "citizens expect the municipality to provide key conditions and services such as a liveable environment, air quality, water supply, waste and wastewater collection and treatment, public transport, housing, health-care

services, and education”.<sup>3</sup> There is no doubt that residents expect that quality of life. The main question is how does that influence their choice against other arguments such as the cost of living or the services.

- Services offered: health services, shopping possibilities, cultural and recreational activities (museum, opera, theatre festivals, etc).
- Social and cultural criteria: friendliness and welcome, social life, historical heritage, city’ specific charm, etc.

Of course cities seek to attract companies before individuals. It’s obviously better and worthier to have enterprises set up, something that will create jobs and maybe solve some local social problems, which attract in people from outside, than trying to attract people, separately from jobs opportunities (moreover people are more difficult to reach and less mobile than companies). Cities’ promotion thus targets mostly companies, whose demand has to be taken into consideration first by the city “boosters”. This demand is mainly economical and depends on location factor, as we have seen, but is also related to the city’s overall qualities (including quality of life, living environment, amenities, etc.) because of the executives.

City promotion also targets potential “urban tourists”, who generally seek tourist facilities, cultural elements (museums, historic monuments, etc.), a high quality of life, accommodation facilities, etc. These tourists can be either “casual” (business trip, congress, exhibit, football match, transit, visit to family or friends, etc.) or “intentional” when they come on purpose to visit the city for its attractions. The city then becomes a place of pleasure and amenities, through the quality and warmth of its welcome, its patrimonial wealth, the charm of its centre streets, etc. The demand here is of course eminently cultural and environmental (P. Noisette, F. Vallérugo 1996; J. Bouinot, B. Bermils 1995).

Finally, there are many reasons, which will be stated later in the paper, why the demand could be greener than what it is most of the time, especially from a certain kind of companies, and which explains also why the environment is likely to be more and more a decisive argument.

### 1.3.2 Entrepreneurial city versus social and environmental issues.

Entrepreneurial policies of course are likely to provide benefits to the city. The principle is that growth creates jobs and provides taxes that enable the city to expand welfare or environmental programs and eventually improves the overall standard of living.

But this growth, even though controlled, has for main impact to increase the flows of energy, water, material, people, thus the global environmental impact of the city. On the other hand, growth, if questionable, is inevitable since it corresponds to market or demographic conditions that are outside and beyond the local level of competence. Thus the city is just under those trends, even though they often try to benefit from them. In this last case, there are always losers, which are other cities that couldn’t take benefit from growth. This implies an unequal distribution of wealth – economic activity mostly- that’s unbearable at a national or even supranational scale. Place competition in itself and consequently place marketing are therefore very questionable realities.

#### 1.3.2.1 Impact of growth policies.

Urban areas have a huge impact on the environment, at the local but also at a regional and even global scale. Directly first since they concentrate people and activities on very limited areas. Second, because the urban lifestyle is much more consuming (water, energy, goods, and transport) than the rural one. Urban areas concentrate more than 80% of the population in developed countries and almost all the industrial production and consumption. The problem of “unsustainability” of cities is therefore crucial.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://cities21.com/egpis/hanncall.html>

Of course, an increasing activity and/or population will (all things being equal) imply an increasing overall impact on the environment, mainly:

- The over-use of non renewable or renewable resources,
- Too much land taking from natural or rural areas to devote to urbanisation,
- Air pollution because of industrial emissions, thermal power plants, individual, or freight transport, etc.
- Serious water and soils pollution because of insufficient water collection and treatment,
- A huge amount of urban waste that comes from the production activities and people's consumption, which is neither separated nor recycled (A. Cunha in C. Jaccoud, M. Schuler, M. Bassand 1996: pp34-41; R. Camagni, M.C. Gibelli 1997: pp5-18, OECD 1995).

Let's take an example: a company sets up in a given city. It's a production plant that will need new, large, and appropriated premises. So they build new buildings in the outskirts of the city. First, land is taken from formerly agricultural or natural areas, making urban and industrial what were once green areas. Then the company will need energy, water for its production facilities and other services. The water and the air flowing out from the plant might be polluted. There will be other flows between the plant and outside: raw material and workers coming in, manufactured parts and workers coming out. The transportation will induce different pollution (air, noise, etc) and congestion. The workers can also be new residents in the city, inducing more consumption of water, energy, more traffic, more waste and wastewater, etc. Of course this impact will be more or less serious according to the city's concern for the environment (in terms of transportation, water treatment efficiency, waste management, etc). But It's undeniable that growth induces a great deal of pollution at the city's scale. On the other hand, it has to be noted that there are advantages in concentrating people on limited areas. Cities don't generate growth of population. The population is just concentrated. Besides, urban lifestyles are often making birth rates decrease eventually, which is rather good. As for the environment directly, land taking is much less significant, so that they are fewer diffuse pollutions and men and activities are not spread throughout the territory, which leaves space for more natural habitats. Moreover, that induces less transport than in the case of more sparsely populated areas. It's also easier to control the pollution (all sewage going to a water treatment plant, or at least in the same network, etc). Beside, many pollution sources are not direct consequences of cities, such as air pollution or the exaggerated use of non-renewable resources by industry and households (M. Polèse 1994: 105-107).

Then it appears that the purpose of this report, which was to investigate whether the green communication of cities could help them better deal with their environmental issues, is based on a paradox, since such eventual improvements would occur thanks to a development and growth of the city. The eventual sustainable situation would first be a steady state of course, a city maybe more dense, an extension upon agricultural or natural land controlled, efficient public transportation, use of bicycles rather than cars, etc.

### 1.3.2.2 Philosophical critics of place competition and promotion.

Competition between cities poses many philosophical questions and raises serious problems.

First it leads to an unequal distribution of wealth, even within countries or regions, between cities that have a potential and are able to benefit from it and others that either don't do much to compete and/or have structural problems that prevent them from entering this scene. There are inevitably winners and losers. It's a "zero-sum game". This gap between successful cities and others is even higher in the US, with declining cities newt to fast growing ones, since it's almost only the market that regulates this competition. Place competition is indeed of political nature, with mostly public actors and funds. This prevents it to be regulated by regular market rules, like bankruptcies or rejections of the weaker when there is too much supply. In this respect it is somewhat incompatible with planning at a national level, which attempts to redistribute the resources and to reach equity between territories and people. The general pattern is that growth causes metropolisation, which in turns induces an even higher concentration of people and activities.

Second, this competition, which implies local initiatives, rests on the exploitation of a supposed competitive advantage of the place over others, and is expected to create returns. Yet according to H. Leitner and E. Sheppard (A. Jonas, D. Wilson 1999:p229), “such a strategy is short-sighted”, since it doesn’t consider that the broader context in which the city operates can influence it a lot. Moreover, place competition and marketing is often not even cost-effective for the city that spends more money on its growth and promotion policies than gets benefit from such policies. This is especially true for already disadvantaged cities that need to reposition themselves and improve their image and actual situation. Entrepreneurial strategies have in most cases failed to reduce unemployment, neighbourhood problems or social exclusion and segregation (A. Jonas, D. Wilson 1999:p232; T. Hall, P. Hubbard 1998 : pp302-305).

Third, this competition can lead to an excessive offer of land for industries, warehouses, or dwellings. It has been the case in France recently, where each town or city wanted its own industrial park or housing estate without caring about the demand. There has thus been an oversupply of developed sites, explaining part of the necessity for some cities to market themselves and often “discount” the land to any company or people likely to set up there. The main problems in this case are, first, environmental with the destruction of previously natural or agricultural areas for surfaced or built areas; second, economic for the municipality that has invested in the development of such areas that eventually will be half unoccupied; and third the impossibility to have any influence on the quality of the constructions and activities taking place. This phenomenon has been strengthened by the fact that companies have been more and more “footloose”. They can also be located further and further from the centres thanks to improved infrastructures of transportation and communication that extend greatly the area likely to interest investors (J.Y. Toussaint, M. Zimmermann 1998: pp113-118).

Lastly a philosophical critics of place marketing can be addressed.

Marketing a city would amount to considering it as an object that can be sold, which of course it is not. A city is a collective property and a social entity, not an enterprise, and therefore must be managed by public actors. According to J.Y. Toussaint and M. Zimmermann, marketing in itself is the opposite of philosophy, and a philosopher would propose just the opposite of what a marketing person would. The reason is that the demand exists only because there are other persons: “Anyone asks for what the other already has. It’s not a relationship but an hysterical demand: we want what the other has. The object in itself is nothing compared to this desire. Yet marketing don’t consider man but just some archetypal figure of what the potential buyer and customer is. The free man is opposite to this man determined by his needs”. When it comes to places specifically, it’s not because we share the same object that we have the same object. In our capitalist world, the object is prior and is split by its distribution. From a marketing point of view, this object is ahead. Yet the object (or project) should be shared first and would then take sense and be really created. The city is more than the enjoyment of an object, it’s a living environment for its residents (P. Noisette, F. Vallérugo 1996: pp15-16; J.Y. Toussaint, M. Zimmermann 1998: pp79-83). Marketing can also appear as a means to manipulate people, that’s why it has to be associated to the concept of strategic planning, and used to reach consensus among actors when it’s lacking. In this respect, it’s a tool for local, social democracy.

Place competition, that mostly aims at making the city grow, can be questioned, too. Growth seems to be a goal for most of the cities. Yet growth can’t be pursued eternally. The sustainable state to achieve eventually is a steady one, in terms of population, activities of production, transport, etc. and even a reduction of some of those patterns that are environmentally and socially unsustainable. Some towns or cities have accepted that and the fact that it was a way of ensuring lasting good living conditions for the residents.

### 1.3.2.3 Anti-growth movements.

Anti-growth movements have existed for decades. Most of the time they emerge from local community groups or green organisations. Their ability to control growth is difficult to evaluate. Molotch (1988, quoted in A. Jonas, D. Wilson 1999: p78) affirms that even the most influent ones in the US have only achieved “sporadic and temporary success”. Yet several studies have shown that

these antigrowth movements, which were much more likely to rise in areas where residents had high education levels, high income, high rate of home ownership, can play a major role in growth control. These classes, which prefer social and environmental issues (notably the protection of the local environment as a guarantee for a good quality of life) to economic development, might actually be quite powerful. Another factor that can lead people to get involved with such movements would be a recent event that threatened the environment, making people realise how important the environment is. A “Strong civic organisation” is also a prerequisite for such movements to appear. It is likely that if strong and representative enough, such movements would lead the local political leaders to adopt such growth control policies, or would have them replaced by the next elections. By controlling the land (issuance of building permits especially), a municipality can, in most of cases (i.e., if self-governing) decide whether it wants to develop or not (A. Jonas, D. Wilson 1999: pp73-89).

## **2 THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION AS AN ASSET FOR THE ORGANISATION’S DEVELOPMENT.**

### **2.1 Green communication in the private sector.**

#### **2.1.1 The need for integrating environmental concerns into companies.**

For the last two decades, industrial companies have started to become more aware of the impact the different steps of their production processes were having on the environment (from the extraction of raw materials and the production to the product itself when thrown away). The main reasons for companies to have taken measures to be less environmentally harmful have changed since the 1970’s. It started when scientists and early environmental groups realised what a threat for the environment and humanity industry was. Great accidents such as Seveso (1976) or Three-miles-Island (1979) even strengthened those movements, whose requirements and expectations were gradually introduced into the legislation and encouraged through economic incentives. Since then the market has been integrating environmental issues into its system, notably through consumerism. Nowadays, with a wider spread and commonly accepted notion of sustainable development, industrial companies still face up great challenges when it comes to integrate the environmental costs of their acts, implement cleaner production techniques, and even design and produce goods that have a lesser impact on the environment throughout their life cycle. But in many cases, companies have moved from a reactive behaviour (complying with the regulations and no more, and sometimes trying to circumvent them) to a more proactive one (integrating the environment in the market, as an argument vis-à-vis the consumers to sell their products and a competitive advantage vis-à-vis other companies that are less caring for the protection of the environment). At the same time, companies have gradually moved from an “end-of-pipe” policy toward green strategies, where the green potential is marketed and the pollution prevented rather than fixed.

The reasons for such a change can be seen as pressure from many stakeholders (for various reasons) on companies to make them more sustainable. In any case it’s not only the law that regulates the companies activities anymore (in terms of environmental protection), but also the market, whose role is actually increasing in this regard.

First the demand is more and more “green”, encompassing a growing variety of products: from food (without GMO’s, without fertilisers or pesticides, contained in recyclable or refillable packaging, etc) to detergents (without phosphates) and cars (less consuming, less polluting), even though there are other factors of choice for consumers –at least as important as the environmental protection- such as price and quality. In any case there has been a greater “green” competition and in certain areas a harmonisation of the environmental standards of internationally sold products.

Second, it contributes to reduce production costs in the long term (through recycling, lower amount of raw material or energy used, etc), even though the initial investment is often high. Therefore, preventive measures can be profitable for companies (A. Caron 1995: pp 53-61; M.Ogrizek 1993: pp 48-69).

## 2.1.2 Measures taken by companies.

As we have previously seen, most companies have been forced, both by the law and the market, to act in a more environmentally-sound way. Companies nowadays can no longer just be reactive and comply with the regulation. Most of them have taken actual measures to lower the impact of their activity and of the goods themselves. Some of course have displayed a green image of actually polluting products. It's the case for instance of unleaded petrol, phosphate-free detergents, etc. It can be of use to review some of the tools used and the direction followed by industrial companies, before addressing their way of communicating about the environment and further see whether this can be applied to cities and to what extent, beyond the specific means cities use.

Cleaner production is the major measure companies can take in order to be less harmful for the environment. It encompasses pollution prevention (product modification, input substitution, technology modification, good housekeeping, and on-site recycling), toxic use reduction and design for the environment (Van Berkel: 1995 pp17-43).

Being more proactive towards environmental issues also implies to identify the various external stakeholders' position vis-à-vis the environment (do they have it as a priority? Directly or indirectly). Certain stakeholders, such as environmental groups or a local community, are indeed likely to pressure a company to implement cleaner production for instance. Others such as shareholders or insurers, will do it because they think this can be profitable for the company or at least avoid it to take risks. Lastly government, through the law forces companies to take measures. The following scheme (fig. 4) shows the different stakeholders of a firm and how they influence it. A similar map of the different stakeholders that influence the local authorities when it comes to the environment is presented later in the text.

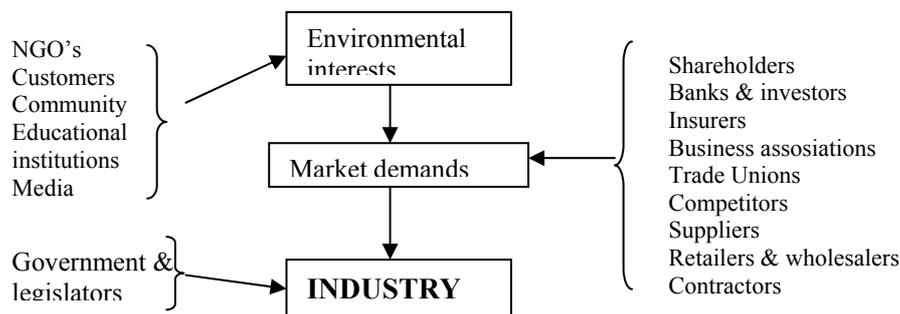


Figure 5: stakeholder map of industries.

Internal stakeholders (i.e., employees) are also to be considered. Some industrial companies set environmental education programs to help them work in a more environmentally sound way and adopt cleaner technologies.

Besides, many companies have set up management policies and systems. Such environmental policies and programs aim at defining the principles and objectives of the company vis-à-vis environmental protection and toward sustainability through "environmental management systems" (EMS), such as EMAS or ISO 14001.

It's important in this respect to use environmental performance indicators to better monitor the evolution and to be able to set the targets.

It's also often necessary, for large companies to set an environmental organisation within their structure to ensure the implementation of such policies and systems. The responsibilities and people/services involved must indeed be clearly defined for a successful EMS. Besides that, most employees should be somehow trained about environmental issues, the impact of their activity, the objectives of the companies to reduce them, and the necessary steps to achieve these objectives.

During the implementation of an EMS, a good communication with some external stakeholders (legislators, local community, investors, suppliers, customers, etc.) is indispensable.

Communication, with both internal and external actors, is therefore a central point for the implementation of an EMS. Many aspects are to be made clear, such as the financial implications of environmental actions for example (investments, Research and Development, cost of waste or wastewater treatment, etc.).

### 2.1.3 Environmental communication plans and Corporate Environmental Reporting.

Besides the marketing of so-called “green” products (that may also benefit from an eco-label), which show by themselves that the company takes care of the environment (or sometimes feigns to do so), there is an institutional environmental communication from companies that target many different stakeholders, and not only consumers.

Environmental Communication may be considered as a process involving both communicators and audiences. It is usually achieved through effective message delivery, interactive listening, and public discussion and debate. Communication about the environment in a company often aims at releasing measures already adopted by the company (cleaner production, EMS setting mainly), thus the company’s environmental performance, its objectives, and everything the company does to protect the environment (green corporate sponsorship, participation in events, congresses, etc). Hence the company tries to show its competitive edge, based on its environmental performance, and at the same time assures its stakeholders about its concerns for the environment. Acknowledging weak points and past errors while talking about potential improvements is also recommended.

Corporate Environmental Reporting (CER) is the main tool used by companies within their communication plan. It is mainly used to suggest in which ways companies can, in their environmental reports, link the progress and commitments they have adopted. According to UNEP (1994) five broad clusters of “reporting ingredients” are needed to make a good corporate environmental report:

- Management policies and systems (i.e., environmental policy, EMS, management responsibilities, legal compliance, etc.)
- An input/output inventory of environmental impacts of production processes and products (i.e., consumption and release of materials, water, energy, etc)
- Financial implications of environmental actions (environmental spending: waste and wastewater treatment, environmental taxes, investments in cleaner technologies, research & development expenditures, etc. / benefits and opportunities: reduction of production costs thanks to new technologies and recycling, reduction of taxes due, etc.).
- Relationships with environmental stakeholders as described above
- Sustainable development agenda.

Corporate environmental reporting is therefore a major means to reach the stakeholders that demand environmental information. The underlying goal of such reporting is to improve the company’s reputation and seize new opportunities.

## 2.2 Strategies and approaches for municipal environmental communication.

Ecological territorial communication has become an important stake on local political scenes. The number of magazines, not necessarily specialised, publishing prize lists of “green cities” illustrates this importance. For instance the magazine “décision environnement” talks about the “first three” for the French cities of Toulouse, Nantes, and Montpellier (Décision environnement n°18, 1993). The environment is therefore a political matter, whose integration into local policies can be reinforced by the influence of the green vote on local political distribution. There is thus a great need for local politicians to communicate their green ambitions, at least to their electors, whether those ambitions are to be achieved or are just idle talk.

The different stakeholders likely to be reached by local environmental communication and to influence the local authorities are presented on the following map, similar to that presented on the previous page for industry. These stakeholders have different positions vis-à-vis environmental concerns. Certain companies likely to set up (through their executives who are expecting a good quality of life and who decide of the localisation –even though they might be different people), or urban tourists are the consumer part of the “market<sup>4</sup>” identified. Their interest and requirements for good environmental conditions influence the city through this market. Some of them such as the local community or the media might have direct interests in having better environmental conditions. They influence the local authorities through the elections for the residents, or the image they convey for the media. Lastly the government or another higher administrative level are influencing directly the local level through the legislation.

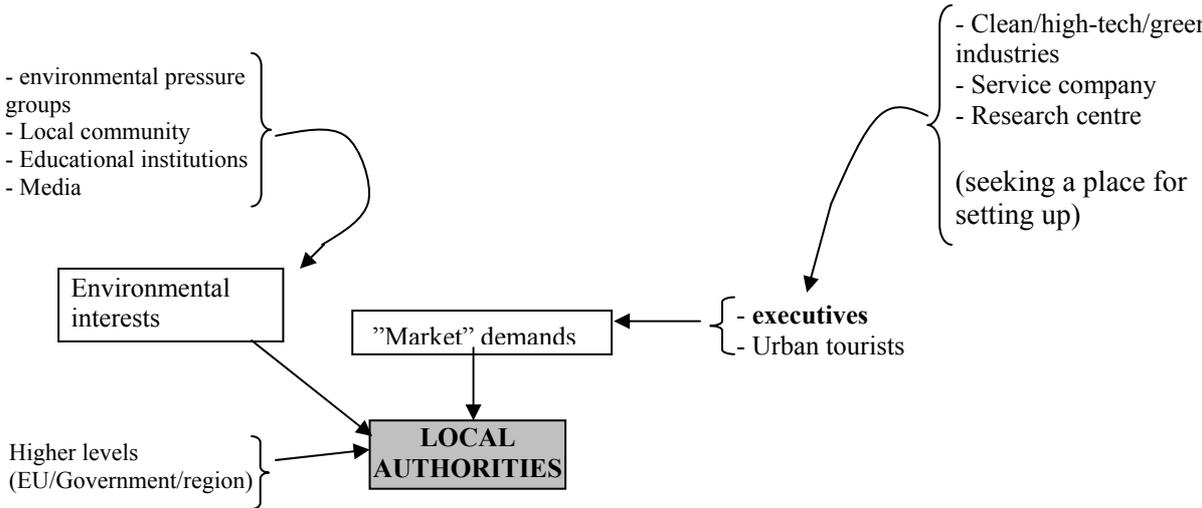


Figure 6: stakeholder map of cities.

The case study of Montpellier will be used in this section to illustrate the ideas and the different tools presented, when it is relevant. It can be interesting to refer to the city’s presentation in appendix 1.

2.2.1 Anti “non-place” communication.

Green communication from local authorities has been focusing on giving more cultural identity to places. M. Augé (quoted in M. Ogrizek 1993) distinguishes places from “non-places”<sup>5</sup> and emphasizes the predominance of these attempts to give more individuality to such non-places in local environmental communication.

The anthropological notion of place is associated to a cultural uniqueness that’s localised in time and space. Thus there are places of memory that belong to the historical and urban heritage, such as the old inner city, parks, monuments, etc. The city itself often tries to be seen as the symbolic place of something specific. Older cities, such as most European ones, always have been a concentration of monuments, places of social interactions, etc. that make them actual “places”.

Non-places on the opposite are rather recent creations that started to be located at the outskirts of cities. They are often anonymous places of short-lived transit, and are associated to a loss of cultural identity in time and space. Non-places can be transport infrastructures, such as airports, highways, interchanges, parking areas, commercial centres, or places such as waste disposal areas, industrial areas, campings, golf courses, etc. Large estates on the cities’ periphery can also be considered as non

<sup>4</sup> The market here corresponds to the commercial system defined by the territory, services and their environmental quality or protection, which are supplied by local authorities, and the demand that is all the actors interested in such a supply.

<sup>5</sup> M. Augé talks about “lieux” (places) and “non-lieux” (non-places).

places, because of their location far from the urban structure and their temporary character. Those non-places are always the stakes of social, cultural, and political control.

Institutional communication from local authorities and environmental groups against non-places has been much reinforced for about 20 years. It expresses the need of local authorities to assert themselves as places, against the extension of non-places. For that purpose, this communication often aims at promoting virtual images of minor or dead places, as a means to give them a certain identity. That shows how acculturated many places have become (M.Ogrizek 1993:pp 31-40). Giving more identity to places can eventually make people using these places, making them eventually acquire a stronger “sense of place”, which we address later in the paper.

More specifically on the scene of interurban competition, there are many tools cities can use in order to display either a good natural environment or the efforts they make and innovative attitude they have vis-à-vis the environment. Some of them are directly inspired by the private sector communication, such as city environmental reporting, city strategic planning, or EMS. Some are more specific to the fields of urban management and marketing, such as local environmental charters, events, planning. This section will first address specific tools likely to serve as elements at various stages of local communication (environmental/sustainability indicators, EMS), whatever the means used to disseminate the message. Then it will deal with the documents the city generates for its environmental planning, policies, etc. and that are rather targeting internal stakeholders (local environmental charters, environmental reporting, strategic plan). Then more classical mediums for external and internal communication, likely to help urban green communication, will be addressed (city eco-labelling, events, promotion of “green industrial parks”).

## 2.2.2 Sustainability indicators

There has been a plethora of studies and definitions of environmental sustainability indicators, that can be shortly defined as “definable, measurable features of our living environment whose absolute levels or rates and direction of change are intended to reveal whether this environment is becoming more or less sustainable” (expert group on the urban environment 1996: p87). The purpose of such indicators is to:

- Quantify information by aggregating different types of incompatible data, thus making it more easily accessible and giving it more significance,
- Simplify information to highlight often complex phenomena.

There is a great number of different types of sustainability indicators, according to the scale of the environment, the objectives, what we want to highlight, etc. There are often indicators that have been developed to answer very specific goals and that are not used anywhere else. Classifications have been made though. The expert group on the urban environment from the European commission has classified them into two main areas: first the environmental indicators s.s., then the quality indicators (expert group on the urban environment 1996: pp87-93, IFEN 1997: pp7-12).

- **Environmental indicators:** They distinguish environmental quality indicators from environmental performance indicators. Environmental quality indicators are primary indicators that are used above all to assess the conditions of key environmental features, helping to define the state of the environment (SoE).

Environmental performance indicators measure rather the influence of human activities on the environment. That corresponds to the “pressure indicators” defined by the OECD<sup>6</sup>. It can be for instance the emissions of greenhouse effect gases, or the weight of waste generated per capita. They also include secondary indicators that evaluate the quality of the environment and tertiary indicators that assess the effectiveness and outcome of the policies led (“response” indicators), i.e., changes in attitudes and actions aimed at mitigating, adapting to or reversing negative impacts on the environment, reversing environmental damage already caused; and conserving the environment.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/env/docs/gd93179.pdf>

Environmental accounting indicators (i.e., indicators evaluating the integration of environmental concerns into economic policies) are also included in this group of indicators, even though their purpose is different.

One of the problems with regard to the scope of this study is that those environmental indicators are not very helpful for communication. They are above all used among experts and policy makers, and don't really speak for themselves to the general public. That's why quality indicators, described below, will be preferred to strict environmental indicators, as they are, by nature, more communication oriented.

- **Quality indicators:** These indicators deal with quality of life in general. It can be useful indeed to relate quality of life to the conditions of environmental sustainability while displaying this message to the public. Quality of life indicators are actually more accessible and meaningful for the wide majority of people, as they convert technical indicators into visible and understandable indicators, touching more people's everyday life than often abstract data. Their use is thus expected to facilitate community involvement, and there is evidence that they can be of use for the external communication of cities. There are two major types of quality indicators. First there are "provocative indicators", that literally aim at making people react about the environment, and eventually bring changes through an increased awareness. They mostly address the following issues: open space, urban form, health, amenities, noise, security, and communication. The surface of green area per resident, the number of dwellings exposed to a certain level of noise are examples of such indicators. The second type of quality indicator is what the expert group calls "indicators of sustainable lifestyle options" that attempt to assess certain qualitative elements of sustainability. They include for instance education, aesthetics, play and leisure or creativity, and are thus quite subjective values, that still need to be taken into consideration.

Just like economic and social indicators that have been used for a longer time (GNP, Unemployment rate, etc), sustainability indicators can be very helpful in measuring and assessing public policies and play a role in defining new measures to be implemented. Indicators are indeed implied by policy aims, but they also help define and set them. That's why the choice of indicators to use is often a matter of policy choice as well, especially in the case of *sustainability* indicators. Sustainability is a rather recent topic that is not always well understood, and the definition of indicators is really tricky and likely to affect people's understanding of sustainable development. The definition of indicators is therefore a process that has to be explicit and clear, and involves not only experts but also actors such as the local community.

It appears that the main advantages of using sustainability indicators are:

- Helping decision-making and the setting of targets
- Allowing for comparison over time and space. Benchmarking is the business term that best corresponds to that.
- Assessing the efficiency of the policies adopted
- Collecting information and making it accessible to both the decision-makers and also the public. This role of information and communication of sustainability indicators is of importance for the subject we are interested with in this report.

As we have seen, quality indicators seem to be the most appropriate to this last purpose of communication, as they are the most accessible and meaningful tools to the general public. It has been even said during the ICLEI "World Congress of Local Governments transformations for a sustainable future" that "indicators were *only* a tool for communication", as a basis for dialogue between policy makers and residents<sup>7</sup>.

It would be interesting to know the potential of such indicators for an external communication, as there are traditionally rather internal communication oriented. It is likely that cities could use them to display particularly good environmental conditions, while comparing the data displayed with national averages for instance. The main question then is: to what extent quality indicators would contribute to the effectiveness of an advertising message? Another crucial question is: what are the best indicators to choose in terms of communication and even people's stimulation potential?

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<sup>7</sup> [http://www2.iclei.org/gc21/day2sessions\\_2g.htm](http://www2.iclei.org/gc21/day2sessions_2g.htm)

It is probable that stating in brochures that a city has, for example, 50% more green areas than the other cities' average indicates probably a better quality of life in this city. Of course, numbers can be deceptive and make believe a situation that is in fact different. If we look at the previous example, the large green areas mentioned could actually be fallow lands at the outskirts of the city instead of parks at its the centre, in which case the limits of indicators as communication tools are reached.

One of the requirements for using such indicators in order to make comparisons between different places is a certain homogeneity of the indicators chosen. There is an immense variety of environmental or quality indicators by now, and almost each local authority is defining its own indicators according to its targets, its approach, etc. This is a problem of standards that international and sometimes national agreements have not yet managed to solve, and there are still many different standards used, such as GUO (Global Urban Observatory), WHO, EU, etc. However, networks such as the European program "respect"<sup>8</sup> attempt to bring this various indicators used into line. They have for main objective to help local actors make decisions by setting lists of indicators (panel). In this particular case, there are 70 indicators adopted by 30 European cities. They first aim at collecting comparable information, over a certain period, on the state of the environment, the impact of local policies on the environment, and the actions led at a given moment. The first goal is of course to help the decision making process, but there is also an important communication aspect, especially targeting the residents. One of the groups of indicators addresses the living environment, that is urbanism, landscape and urban ecology (C. Farrugia-Tayar 2000). Such data have been in some cases made known to the general public, like in the French town of Mulhouse (Alsace) where there are four interactive terminals in the centre that provide anyone is interested with the panel's data. Such information is made easy with the rapid development of information technologies, and it is likely that there is a great potential for that. Many cities indeed have already started to do so, notably by setting a real, institutionalised, "watchdogs" of the urban environment, which objective is to inform both decision-makers and the public. Then it's a matter of knowing what themes to focus on and which indicators to choose (C. Farrugia-Tayar 2000; IFEN 1998 p154).

Indicators are also of great use for the setting and implementation of an EMS, as we have seen in a previous section. In any case, sustainability indicators have to be monitored continually to really make sense, in order to well assess the state of the environment at different moments and thus the trends. The expert group on the urban environment advises to monitor the environmental indicators rather through SoE reporting (on a regular basis), and environmental performance indicators through an Environmental Management System. Such indicators can also be of use in the case of benchmarking (i.e., the fact that local authorities compare the city they are in charge of with others) and when the city is part of a network of cities (often organised around one or several main themes, such as delinquency in the neighbourhood, health, environment, etc). The importance of such networks will be addressed later in the report.

The city of Montpellier doesn't assess neither its state or its impact and environmental policies' outcome in terms of environmental or quality indicators yet. Still the municipality answers national surveys every year concerning the environment, such as the IFEN<sup>9</sup> data collection and environmental reporting. These surveys require the local authorities to provide specific data, which means that the basic data does exist. A project called "écoloscope" is being set indeed and should start next year (but has been stopped for electoral reasons in early 2001). The "écoloscope" will be a panel of indicators used as an internal tool by municipal employees, for better work for the environmental field, in all the municipality's departments.

### 2.2.3 Municipal Environmental Management Systems (EMS)

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<sup>8</sup> « RESPECT » Référentiel d'Evaluation et de Suivi des Politiques Environnementales des Collectivités Territoriales (assessment and follow up frame of local authorities' environmental policies) - It's a component of the European « life » program .

<sup>9</sup> French Institute for the environment, whose books are used in the report. Cf.: references.

As we have seen before, an EMS is an instrument that enables an organization, whatever its size, type or status (private or public) to control the impact of its activities, products or services on the natural environment. Environmental management systems can then be used by local authorities to improve their operations and make them more sustainable. The EMS used by municipalities include Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) and ISO 14000. EMAS is valid only within the EU member states, and as it has a legal status, it is likely to be more “prescriptive” towards environmental management issues. Besides, EMAS is mostly applied to manufacturing companies, and only rarely to public organisations such as local authorities. On the other hand, the ISO 14000 standard are instruments that require more voluntary acceptance by all the parties involved. It is therefore supposed that a consensus is reached between each party’s needs and expectations. That’s why it is sometimes considered to be weaker than EMAS. By contrast, ISO 14000 can be adopted by all kinds of organisations, including local authorities. It is therefore mostly in the implementation of this latter standard the municipalities will be interested in<sup>10</sup>.

UK though has adapted the EMAS to its local authorities, where it has been introduced since 1993. Such an adapted EMAS promotes policy integration by:

- preparing corporate overview and coordination of environmental performance within the municipal services.
- acknowledging and identifying the environmental impacts of the municipality’s policies as well as the direct effects of its activities.

The requirements for a municipality that wishes to implement an EMS are:

- To adopt corporate environmental policies,
- To identify significant environmental impacts
- To set and lead programs of action
- To monitor and report on progress towards the set targets
- To adapt policies and programs to the results. (Expert group on the urban environment 1996: p76)

EMS are often used by companies as an argument, a proof that they actually care for the environment. Currently not so common within municipal organisations, we can wonder what effects the EMS could have on the city’s image in terms of environment. Of course, as the ICLEI warns, ISO 14001 or an other EMS “should not be used just as a marketing tool but be a true reflection of the corporate commitment to environmental protection”. There is therefore a risk that the local authority focuses on the EMS’s ability to disclose the city’s good natural environment or its actions and progress towards more sustainability, at the expense of the real function of EMS. However, EMS such as ISO 14000 have do not aim at achieving sustainability, but rather set procedures to work towards it. Hence implementing an EMS mustn’t be a final goal but one of the tools to make the municipal activities more environmentally sound. EMS are considered as one of the major tools for formulating, integrating and implementing local environmental policies.

The communication aspect of EMS is therefore not to be feared, if the adopted EMS has real objectives of controlling and lowering the environmental impacts of the municipal operations. EMS can help internal communication first since the success of a municipal EMS will only be ensured through local community involvement and participation. People must be made aware of and trained on the issues, in order to be able to take part in the process leading to the adoption of an EMS. External actors might also be informed on an ongoing process of EMS setting. EMS indeed have for objective to communicate to external stakeholders the commitment of the organisation to demonstrable environmental management, to maintain good public/community relations, to enhance the image and then get “market share” if this term can be applied to a public market.

Obtaining certification for EMS like ISO 14000 or EMAS actually often brings a widely recognised evidence of the authorities’ concern for the environment, and is therefore an undeniable advantage for communicating this theme.

Besides, once set, the EMS must serve as a basis for communication through Corporate Environmental Reporting, for instance.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.tc207.org/faqs/faqs-main.htm>  
[http://www2.iclei.org/gc21/day2sessions\\_2o.htm](http://www2.iclei.org/gc21/day2sessions_2o.htm)

An EMS has yet neither been set in the municipality of Montpellier nor in related public services such as the district. However, an EMS is to be adopted in the coming years.

#### 2.2.4 Local environmental charters

They correspond in the industry to environmental charters and guidelines, which are often produced by NGO's, with the general aim of helping businesses manage and improve their environmental performance. They are thus rather statements of good faith and they rarely contain legally binding commitments. It's often a first step that in itself has no actual effect, but rather prescribes policies, general targets and tools to be used (M. Brophy).

Local environmental charters, declaration or statements are overall statements of the environmental values and goals of a local authority, often over a period of 3 to 5 years. The main function of such charters is to set a agenda for the local authorities' services involved and for the community. It also justifies the development of an environmental policy and related actions and provides criteria for evaluating the environmental effects of activities both by the residents and the local authorities. Lastly, it's an important tool for internal communication and awareness raising, since all the steps (initiating, drafting, adopting) must involve not only the local community but also many different stakeholders. This phase of drawing up the charter is therefore very active in terms of communication. Then the charter can be revised to adapt to the evolution and eventually become more complete. It's also often such charters that include the local agendas 21. Beyond this, a charter is not a document aiming at communicating to a large audience. It's mostly intended for internal use (by the local authorities services concerned), as basic principles and guidelines on how to proceed. It's not likely to be circulated as an external communication (expert group on the urban environment; IFEN 1998: pp160-161; internet sources<sup>11</sup>)

Montpellier has adopted a local environmental charter in 1994. This charter set principles and several major trends towards sustainable development, among which the main ones are: the urban transport sector (development of public transport: tramway and buses and the use of bicycles), the limitation of the urban expansion, waste management (separation, recycling), education (educative actions to academic and general public), water management and treatment and green areas development. In all, there are 83 actions defined in order to eventually achieve a more sustainable state. This charter has been prepared and designed through a dialogue with the national state, the local non-profit organisations and residents. Social participation in particular has involved local councillors and green organisations, who have been chairing more than 100 open meetings in the different neighbourhoods. The charter is still evolving now, integrating even more aspects such as energy efficiency programs, transportation, GMO's, air quality notably and sustainable development in general. This would lead eventually to the implementation of an agenda 21, which is being currently designed.

#### 2.2.5 City strategic planning.

As we have seen in a previous section, city strategic planning is a major process cities can lead that have significant effects. It first aims at developing the city, in terms of activities, infrastructures, amenities, thus often slipping on social and environmental concerns, by setting general aims and targets for long-term planning. The strategic plan is marketed all along the process, especially to internal actors, i.e., residents and companies mainly, in order to ensure their participation and support to the projects. It appears then that city strategic planning, by involving those local actors and communicating to them, can be a useful tool to raise awareness within the local community as well as a factor to improve cooperation between local authorities and local companies in terms of

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.charnwoodbc.gov.uk/environment/charter.htm>;  
<http://www.charnwoodbc.gov.uk/environment/policies.htm>

environmental issues. The potential of city strategic planning seems strong when it comes to communication to and support from the local actors. Wouldn't it be efficient to use it also to communicate on the environment, i.e., better integrate within the plan the environmental policies the city wish to implement? That is actually what the expert group on the environment advises (1996).

As we have seen before, the fact that marketing techniques are used for setting such strategic plans may have many positive effects. For the residents, it is likely to raise awareness, to make them better understand the importance of the issues and how their municipality intends to address them. It also helps develop the place identity and a sense of place among residents, which can only be positive results. We also know how important those values are when it comes to the environment: people's awareness is a basic requirement for a sustainable management and development of places, since people are the main actors, the basis of every activity; a strong sense of place also implies a stronger will to protect it, and so on. Strategic plans thus appear to be useful and efficient tools for the internal environmental communication of cities. Yet it seems that they seldom integrate methodological frameworks such as the European Urban charter or the agenda 21, especially because such documents are often more recent than the strategic plan (J. Bouinot, B. Bermils 1995). This is the case for Montpellier indeed.

## 2.2.6 Environmental reporting.

It is state of the environment (SoE) reporting that is mainly the concern in this section. SoE reporting is a process of environmental monitoring that has been used for about a quarter of century at various levels (national, regional, local). This kind of reporting provides a sound, reliable and up-to-date basis for better informed decisions and for general public information. They must be published on a regular basis: every one or two years for instance.

The main objectives of such reports are:

- Communicate usable information to decision-makers to help them work towards sustainable development.
- Provide benchmark environmental data for the evaluation of the impact of environmental policies.
- Identify issues (environmental problems) that need to be addressed and information gaps.
- Raise people's awareness with easily readable and accessible information.

If compared to environmental reporting in firms, one can observe that the latter is much more common. Every large firm nowadays produces periodical environmental reports, aiming at improving the company's reputation with regards to their work towards sustainability (vis-à-vis many stakeholders: consumers, but above all those involved in the company, such as shareholders, insurers, etc) and seize new opportunities. In municipalities until now, it rather appears as a means of communication that has been recommended to local authorities from higher authorities, such as the UN environmental program or the EU, rather than coming from the municipalities' own initiatives.

The expert group on the urban environment distinguishes two principal types of SoE reports. The first one attempts to be a comprehensive review of all the environmental impacts of the city, by prioritising major issues of course. The second is more "policy-oriented" as it collects and organises only the information necessary to set or assess policy objectives. Such a report therefore links up with the management tools we have discussed, such as sustainability indicators or EMS. The risk here is to lose sight of the whole picture and focus on specific data that doesn't represent the actual situation. The expert group thus advocates cities to produce reports that fall between those two types.

There are two major ways of structuring a city SoE report:

- First it can be organised around environmental media (e.g. air, land, water). It's actually the method advocated by the American Environmental Protection Agency.
- Another possibility is a structure around environmental issues (e.g. climate change, acidification, etc). It is the method used by the OECD.

No matter the chosen method, it has to be easily understandable by all. It indeed often aims at enhancing the reader's ability to link "state" with "pressure"(what has an impact) issues, in order to make him/her reach conclusions about the necessary "responses" (environmental policies and actions) to reduce particular pressures and then improve the state.

To conclude, Environmental reporting aims at communicating specifically on the environment. If of good quality, the information is very relevant for these issues and is often accessible, it's therefore a great instrument for spreading the information. Again the problem is related to the readership: who is going to read such SoE reports? The local community could be interested in being informed about their city's environmental state and their representatives' actions concerning these matters. Outside the city, people working in the environmental field, upper administrative levels and other –competing-cities or green organisations could also be prone to read such documents. But again it's not an information that will be made available to a wide audience, although it's probably more so than the city plans we have mentioned above.

In Montpellier, there is currently no environmental reporting. Instead, municipal newsletters address some environmental issues, mostly reporting the actions led by the municipality, the upcoming events or improvements with regards to transportation, traffic and waste management, green parks, air pollution, water treatment, etc. However there is no proper SoE reporting, even though the municipality assures this is going to be set soon, at the same time as the “écoscope”, since the indicators chosen will serve as a basis for such reporting.

The instruments we have mentioned in these three last sections were rather internal actors oriented, or if intended to external actors, those must be very specialised and interested to voluntarily refer to such documents before deciding to set up in a given city.

The same can be said for the environmental charters or city strategic plans. Aside from the decision-makers themselves, such documents are likely to be almost exclusively read by the local community or companies, provided they were involved into their working out and that they have actually participated in it, or are really interested by those issues. As we have seen in the case of Montpellier, the environmental charter's design provides a good example of what social participation must be. It's indeed a means of communication since such meetings and discussions are probably much more profitable in terms of raising awareness and support from the residents than any other traditional means of communication.

Green organisations or organisations interested in benchmarking could also be willing to refer to such documents. Nevertheless, any given company or even more so for an individual that would like to set up in a given city, is unlikely to consult them, except if their activity for instance is related. In any case, it's not the purpose of such documents to communicate the local authorities commitment vis-à-vis environmental issues to the general public, except for SoE reports. It would be interesting however to find out which percentage of people who know about such reports and who have read one. Environmental reporting in the private sector seems to be more widespread, targeting specific stakeholders. As we have seen, panels of indicators are more and more common means of assessing and communicating the environmental state, impacts and effects of the measures taken in the municipality. These are tools aiming at helping the employees better know about the environmental issues and better work towards sustainability, but are also to help communicate the evolution of the urban environmental state.

As far as external communication is concerned, the information contained in those documents may reach a larger readership through a communication by regular media: newspapers, specialised or not, internet sites, or others.

## 2.2.7 Media

Media represent another dimension of the city's communication compared to all what we discussed above. Media can actually talk about the city, and particularly its environment as they choose to do so for various reasons (particular event, pollution occurrence, remarkable initiative, etc). They can also be asked to talk about it, in which case it is advertising.

Montpellier communicates above all via the written press and its own internet sites. The local

newspaper are actually a very good means of disseminating the information for the local authorities. For that purpose, the communication department (through its press attachés) organises press conferences to which the media are welcomed to attend. It was the case for example when the new plan for public transport (launching of the tramway and development plan for the bicycle paths) was set. In such occurrence, a special “press” report is distributed, and it’s up to the media to choose which information to disseminate. Nevertheless, it seems a good way for the local authorities to talk about its new actions towards sustainability and speak about itself in general. Moreover it’s free, unlike advertising. Montpellier also pays for advertising inserts in the press. The communication service publishes such inserts mostly in economic magazines. Each time, the good natural environment (around and in the city), as well as the quality of life, are at least mentioned once as part of the main assets of the city. The city doesn’t communicate much through the press that specialises in the environment though, even if it’s mentioned in some environmental yearbooks. Yet the communication department intends to set out a press trip focusing on the environment after the municipal elections of March 2001 (interview with Mrs De Zeeuw 2001). For its internal communication, the city publishes and distributes freely a monthly newspaper, which is fairly general but addresses the environmental actions and issues when there is a need to do so. There is no regular review of such issues. However, the city and the district also distribute free booklets or even postcards that address specific matters, e.g. the trees in the city, the need to respect the cyclists or to not to throw away waste outside the bins, map city’s bicycle paths, etc. This distribution has both an information role and an educational function.

The internet site also considers all the environmental aspects, beside (and at the same level) all the other assets, that are mainly: easy communication with the other cities in France and Europe (high speed train, airport, highways), the “reservoir of a young and high quality labor” the presence of high tech and innovative industries and universities, and an “exceptional lifestyle, i.e., an active cultural life and a lively city. The environment is indeed presented as a first ranked asset among these, which are more and more economic and social oriented advantages. There are links with the different municipal (or relating to) organisations dealing with environmental issues at the city scale: the district<sup>12</sup>, the “maison de l’environnement” (environmental centre) and also specific pages about the tramway and its future development or the nature reserves (internet sites about the city<sup>13</sup>: city of Montpellier, district of Montpellier, association of French “technopoles”, French American Chamber of Commerce)

## 2.2.8 Eco-labelling.

Eco-labelling schemes are used on the market to differentiate products that are considered as having a lower environmental impact according to certain criteria. The main features of such eco-labelling schemes are first the voluntary character of the participation, the fact that criteria are developed according to a certain procedure and made available to the public, and that getting such a label implies paying an annual fee. The main objectives are:

- to raise consumer awareness.
- improve sales and image of the labelled products.
- provide the public with accurate and simple information.
- stimulate product and process design for the environment<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> type of intermunicipal organisation that can have various competences. The district of Montpellier, encompassing the urban area, is responsible for the public transportation, waste management, water treatment, educational actions, management of the “technopole” , and other non environmental fields such as sports or social actions.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.ville-montpellier.fr/fr/env/>  
<http://www.ville-montpellier.fr/fr/env/0602-mtpdurable-fr.htm>  
<http://www.ville-montpellier.fr/fr/env/0606-maisenv-fr.htm>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.emnet.co.uk/emage/BES/>

Ecolabels, as a means to differentiate green products, are a very efficient tool in the goods production (private) sector, that promotes consumerism as a market-based instrument encouraging companies to design and product more environmentally friendly goods.

It's of course not conceivable to apply eco-labelling as such to cities. But the principle appears to be of interest for the purpose of the study. Even outside the current formal system of eco-labelling schemes that are traditionally used for goods (EU Eco-label award scheme or national eco-labels such as "green seal" in the US or "NF environnement" in France), eco-labels for cities could have a very positive results, especially in terms of visibility for the city, provided that there is a recognised eco-label. The audience targeted by such an eco-label could indeed be quite large. Besides, setting such an eco-label would be a difficult task, and couldn't be based on Life Cycle Assessments (LCA) as it is the case for the products labelled. The choice to grant the eco-label to a city or not could be based in this case more upon environmental indicators results and the presence of an EMS that are less objectives than an LCA, but provide indications on how (un)sustainable a city is.

Montpellier was nominated "eco-labelled city" at the Lisbon conference in 1996. The city managed to get this label thanks to its previous actions for a better urban environment (public transport, waste management, green areas development, environmental education program, etc) and also thanks to a new program, part of which has been implemented yet. This label is often mentioned in the city advertising, but there is no exaggerated emphasis on this "plus factor", which is not that indicative for anyone who seeks a place to set up. Such labels could acquire more significance and meaning in the near future, but presently they seem to have only a rather narrow scope.

### 2.2.9 Events.

Particular events dealing with environmental issues may take place in the city, making it appear to the persons involved or simply reached by the information as a pro-active city, one that seeks answers to environmental and sustainability issues. Such events can be just congresses or even European or international conferences, which are widely covered by the media. The message is circulated even more when an agreement is signed at the end, as was the case in Lisbon or Aalborg recently, names that will be linked to the agreements forever. There can also be "environmental festivals", which are mentioned by the expert group on the urban environment (1996: p71) as a project likely to help involve public on a large-scale. The objective of such festivals is thus mostly to reach the residents, make them participated and get involved within a theme. One can mention the "car free day", or the international day for the environment (on June 5 in 2001). For this occasion, the city of Montpellier has launched a festival called "les comédies de l'environnement" (comedies of the environment"), that in fact lasts five days. The festival is organised by several actors: the municipality, the district, professionals in the field of environment and non-profit organisations notably. Each year, there is new theme, such as "trees in the city" in 2001 (interview with M. Demaison 2001). The main objective is awareness-raising among the residents. For that purpose, a large, free and public-opened exhibit stands in the city centre, in a very busy area ("place de la comédie") and offers visits, contacts with certain sectors (open-day), participation of pupils. In 2000 the festival attracted several dozens thousands of people. It is expected to have the same success this year. This event is thus a very good way of conveying the importance of environmental and sustainability issues among people. The media and the organisations' communication also relay this event and its outcomes.

### 2.2.10 Business parks.

Business parks are an interesting way for local authorities to attract companies. Although they can't be placed on the same level than all the media and tools we have seen before, those specific areas are part of the arguments cities use to attract companies on their territory. It's then up to the local authorities to market those areas by using the previous communication tools. In any case it seemed interesting here

to mention this recent concept of business park<sup>15</sup>. If existent or planned, such green centres are often advertised and target high tech or “green” companies, i.e., production firms that use “clean” methods (through the products made and the production processes) or companies working in the environmental field (e.g. consultants in environmental management, company proposing technical solutions to environmental problems: waste or water treatment, soil decontamination, landscape gardeners, etc). Are often associated laboratories and university departments.

The development of such areas is often very concerned with environmental and quality of life issues, as it attempts to better integrate infrastructures and buildings into the landscape, to preserve large green areas, to limit the building’s energy consumption for heat or light (“eco-buildings”), facilitate the use of public transport between those areas and the city centres (e.g. tramways), etc. Further, there is often a selection of the companies that apply for setting up in such areas. The local authorities or the organisation responsible for marketing it might set very severe conditions and constraints in terms of environmental protection from the activities and buildings. The main benefits for the companies setting up in business parks encompass both a better image and higher quality of the working environment.

Montpellier, that used to have for slogan : “Montpellier the hyper-intelligent<sup>16</sup>” has several “technopoles” on which the city’s activity rests a lot. “Montpellier technopole” is run by the district, and has three key poles:

- Information & Communication Technologies, called “Antenna”
- Medicine, Life Sciences and Biotechnology, called “Euromédecine”
- Agronomy, Water Management, and environment, called Agropolis.

The two latter (Euromédecine and Agropolis) are those encompass environmental sciences’ activities and research. Montpellier’s image of a high-tech and skilled city is mostly due to these technopoles and also to the university. The different areas of the technopole are located on the outskirts of the city, but adjacent to the city centre, and are well served by public transportation. The newly built tramway links the city centre with the university and Euromédecine, and is not far from Agropolis. Also, many buses run through the urban area and going to the other parts of the technopole. The technopole is very much specialised in the field of environmental sciences, with institutions such as International cooperation centre of agricultural research for development, the Centre for industrial ecology, the Institute for research for development (ex-Orstom), the US Department of Agriculture, the National centre for machinery in agriculture, rural areas, water and forestry, the National scientific research centre, the French research institute for maritime operations, etc. Besides these principally research organisations, there are many companies involved in such activities, which are located in the vicinity. The district also proposes services to welcome and help companies setting up. Montpellier technopole is therefore typical of those high-tech business parks where the economy is at best linked with ecology. Remits are indeed very severe for companies that wish to set up there. There are also particular locations for those enterprises, according to their field of expertise, such as environment and agronomy in and around Agropolis for example. There is therefore a willingness from the local authorities to associate more closely the setting up of companies with criteria of protection of the environment and landscapes. Last this technopole plays the role of a vehicle for the city, whose image is conveyed through all the activities and movements of people that take place around the technopole. For instance, executives from abroad visiting a subsidiary company, scientists coming in Montpellier for a congress, or people in charge of finding new sites of production or research & development activities will be welcomed by the authorities responsible for the technopole management. Therefore the technopole will be their first -if not their only- contact with the city. That’s why the technopole, then the city, has to disclose its concerns for the environment. However, other aspects such as the economic incentives (from local and national sources) and low-tax zones for newly set up companies

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<sup>15</sup> called “technopole” in France and even “ecopoles” for the business parks that associate more closely environment and industries, in terms of activities (clean activities, ecological buildings, etc) and planning (integration of natural areas for amenities and landscape concerns). The creation of “technopoles” started in France in the 1970’s with Meylan (near Grenoble) and Sophia-Antipolis (near Nice) and more recently for the “ecopoles”.

<sup>16</sup> The original French slogan is “Montpellier la surdouée”.

might still overwhelm the environmental requirements from both the municipality and the company (that might also be sensitive to quality of life issues, not only in terms of environment but also cultural equipments, amenities, etc). Still, the technopole is a great asset for a city that wishes to display a high-tech, skilled, but also green image of itself.

(R. Brunet & al 1988; internet sources<sup>17</sup>).

### **3 ADVANTAGES OF PROMOTING A GREEN CITY.**

#### **3.1 Expected competitive advantage and potential resulting long-term benefits for the environment.**

The purpose of this section is to investigate some ways in which an entrepreneurial management of cities, and more particularly marketing and communication around environmental issues or concerns can be beneficial for the cities, both in terms of competitive advantage against others and for its physical environment. The assumption again is that cities don't only communicate "green", but also take actual actions for implementing the principles determining an eventual sustainable state.

First marketing a "green city", based on the presence of a green business park can lead to a selection of activities towards more sustainable ones. Second, as far as internal communication is concerned, there are many advantages in reminding the local community how well the city does in improving the state of the environment. Third, as the environmental requirements, both from the people directly interested: residents, local companies, green organisation and those indirectly concerned (media, external companies looking for a new site, etc) and also from the legislator, are expected to become more and more severe, it is judicious for the city to be ahead with respect to the environmental protection.

Then the limits of those so-called advantages will be discussed, and some alternatives be proposed.

##### **3.1.1 Public-private partnerships around environmental issues.**

As we have seen, there are increasingly often real public-private partnerships organised around the management of cities, and especially their entrepreneurial development. In that case, the public and the private sector are led to work together in order to seek, set and implement solutions that wouldn't be that worthy were they to be taken by either one or the other side individually. This means that both benefit from such partnerships. It has to be noted however that the private actors seek private interests of course, and that the public one is supposed to seek the general interest.

Such partnerships can have general competencies, such as the strategic planning of cities. They can also appear for more sectorised competencies, such as financing infrastructures or intervening in the communication of the city (J. Ruegg, S. Decoutère, N. Mettan 1994: pp 5-10). This section addresses the advantages that can be sought out for cities, both in economic terms and for the state of their environment eventually. There are not direct consequences from the fact that the city communicates "green". It's rather the fruit of entrepreneurial municipal policies and also the fact that both companies and local authorities see an opportunity in working the environment (concretely and in their communication).

Before talking about particular synergies between private and public actors, it must be noted that we can expect "entrepreneurial" cities seeking growth to get financial benefits from such policies and eventually be able to invest more in the protection of the environment. However, it must also be reminded that such policies are often very costly for municipalities, and sometimes surpass the

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.tech-montpellier.com/anglais/nav.htm>;  
<http://www.france-technopoles.asso.fr/TECHNOPO/MONTPEL/corpsf.htm>;  
<http://www.tech-montpellier.com/anglais/setting/page.htm>

benefits. Beside, they often don't manage to reduce unemployment or solve urban social problems. It is therefore likely that they won't have better effects on the environment eventually. Moreover, the environmental impact of growth, especially when it's badly controlled, are often significant. In fact there can be various situations, and it's not utopian to believe that the money brought by entrepreneurial policies into the municipality's budget can be used to improve the state of the environment and make more efforts towards more sustainability. That will depend on the policy led by local authorities, their priorities and their ability to control the growth.

When it comes to the environment specifically, we have seen that the integration of environmental concerns is an increasing stake for companies. Although most of them still have an impact on this environment. The localisation of companies' production, selling and disposal on particular territories such as cities and their connections with the local communities (geographically and employer/employee link) make them confront local authorities' initiatives. The latter have indeed large prerogatives in protecting the environment and implementing upper levels' environmental policies. It is probable that the synergies produced by a joint integration of environmental concerns of both private and public actors will lead to large scale prevention actions for a better environment and towards more sustainability. It is indeed increasingly strategic for the two categories of actors to work the environment. The eventual improvements would thus depend on the quality of the interactions between private and public actors.

If we consider that both private and public actors have an interest in using strategically their environmental concern, it's possible to identify synergies between them, as one's success contributes to the other's and eventually lead to global improvements.

Caron tries to identify those synergies (A. Caron 1995: pp 53-71). The case of the business parks, which we have talked about before, is an early example illustrating them. Business parks were created in the 1970's as cities were becoming more attractive (metropolisation) and self-governing,. They were initially conceived as a means to reinforce the local attractiveness, especially targeting high-tech industries. Industries were (and still are) benefiting from an exceptional environment: close to schools, universities and research centres, etc. Cities were of course also benefiting from those high-tech, dynamic and money-making companies.

According to A. Caron, one essential synergy would be the fact that the use of the environmental theme within both companies communication plans and cities communication towards consumer/citizens could contribute to reinforce each other's use of such a theme. Of course, such a synergy would be more or less strong according to the type of industrial activity considered and the company's commitment towards environmental matters. It's mostly companies that need to take good care of their images, as non-polluting and proactive firm vis-à-vis the environment, that are likely to be sensitive to green municipal communication policies. However, A. Caron acknowledges that even though the city's actions or the quality of its living environment contribute to its overall attractiveness, the environment as a "selling" point is not yet the key factor for companies to choose a place.

Another synergy would come from more technological arguments and would imply a preferential location of "green" companies. The integration of environmental concerns, as we have seen, often lead to product or process innovations. Research and development activities are therefore essential components. "Technopoles" in this respect appear as favoured places for such "green" companies to set up, as cooperation is more likely to take place with "downstream" companies or with other firms and organisations. Such business parks and of course the cities on which they depend try to benefit from the site's often good environmental quality.

Considering those synergies, a particular location of green companies is expected, and is actually observed.

As for the improvements we can expect from such preferential locations, they come both from the municipality and the companies, and are diverse.

First, as the municipality plans its business park with a significant concern for the protection of the environment, it's probable that all the outflows of wastewater or solid waste will be treated in an environmentally sound manner. Moreover, planning such an area implies developing simultaneously public transportation and facilities for bicycles and pedestrians. There will also be constraints for the

companies setting up<sup>18</sup>, in terms of building (ecological buildings may be required) and cleanliness and sustainability of their activities, e.g. no harmful effluents or smokes, recycling, an energy efficiency program, etc. There can also be secondary effects, as a increased awareness among the people working in such parks, who are likely to adopt greener behaviour, and even to share their concerns and behaviours. The environment could of course, at a local scale, benefit from such synergies leading to greener companies located in greener areas. Of course there are drawbacks, as this could lead to inequalities between places, since polluting companies (or at least not high tech, not welcome to set up in a business park, etc) would still remain; so would less concerned cities, such as those that seek to reduce unemployment and favour this problem over the environment. That question will be addressed more in detail in the “limits” section.

Aside from this particular case of high-tech, green companies (to simplify) and green business parks, public-private partnerships around environmental issues can simply help companies take the environment more into account. For instance, there are often technical and even financial help from local authorities for companies to reduce their impact on the environment, as the case of Linz (Austria), mentioned by the OECD (1995), shows. Local authorities there and polluting industrial companies have cooperated to find solutions to those problems within the frame of an ambitious environmental program, which became a real success. It’s also the case in Canterbury (Kent – UK), where the local community has provided help to small and medium enterprises in order for them to better integrate the environment in all their activities, especially with regards to environmental management and auditing, through information, advises and technical support<sup>19</sup>. The project, called “Good for Business, Good for the Environment” involved public actors at several levels (city council, county council’s Economic Development Department mainly), one public-private organisation (East Kent Initiative), a Business school and SME’s of the Kent area. Communication played major role, and was based on dialogue between and within SME’s, business advisors, local public actors specialised in the field of environment management. The results of this project encompass a better knowledge for business advisors and for businesses themselves in the field of environmental management, better relations between private and public actors and (networks) and of course a globally raised environmental awareness, which is likely to imply eventually better environmental practises from SME’s. In this case we note the development of real coalitions, as in the entrepreneurial cities, but that are not necessarily “growth coalitions”. It appears that such coalitions in themselves are rather beneficial, as long as they are not only economic oriented and don’t just benefit a certain elite.

### 3.1.2 The advantages of a better communication to the local community.

The communication of a city (through indicators, EMS, strategic planning, etc ) targets not only external actors, but also internal actors (that is: municipal employees, residents, local organisation and companies). There are three major objectives in communicating to such actors:

- Service: it aims at informing the residents about their relations with the municipality and about the facilities the city offers.
- Make known the municipality’s actions, especially in the areas where it is not directly visible. Such communication has to be disconnected from political and election issues. It can for instance help support the strategic planning process.
- Actions aiming at involving “citizens-residents-consumers” in the thinking, design and implementation processes of projects. Social participation is actually one of the guarantees of success. There must be real debates, public meetings, publications, forums, etc. for all projects and decisions to be made.

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<sup>18</sup> A survey carried out by the “BIPE” over 450 French towns in 1992 showed that among the constraints a local decision-maker would lay down vis-à-vis the setting up of an industry, the protection of the environment was ranked first. « BIPE » means: Bureau d’Information et de Prévisions Economiques (economic information and forecasting organisation) - (source : J.P. Carrière, P. Mathis 1995).

<sup>19</sup> <http://cities21.com/egpis/egpc-114.html>

The importance of this internal communication is especially true in the field of environmental issues, as a good communication to the community only has advantages in this respect. The expert group on the urban environment indeed affirms that attention should be paid more to the possibility of marketing the sustainability message in order to generate community involvement and increase awareness.

- First it triggers people or organisations' involvement and participation in all the actions or plans concerning the environment. Consequently, these actors become strong supporters for such a policy, which is more or less a guarantee of its durability, since the elections offer less risks to punish the local authority involved.

- Second, it helps raise the community's awareness. For example, when a municipality sets a program of waste separation, there has to be means of educating and training people, in order for the program to succeed. The expert group on the environment (1996) proposes innovative mechanisms for such an education, such as systems of information exchange, that are interactive, informal and voluntary, "eco-feedback" or global action plan. These tools are likely to be used by local authorities to ensure the success of particular programs or for goals such as raising general awareness. Awareness of people and some knowledge of the environmental issues, the impacts, their causes and the solutions, are indeed core requirements for a future sustainable city. Through their everyday behaviour, people, dwellers in the case of cities, can adopt many changes. They can use public transportation more, ride a bicycle or walk instead of taking the car, separate waste, consume less energy or water, prefer "green" purchase, etc. All those simple preferable behaviours have a large potential to lower significantly the impact on the environment. Moreover, residents are not only just residents but also often have an activity. They carry their knowledge and concerns to their work place, which is indeed also a place where modified behaviours can induce lower impacts. The same can be said for any activity people practise or any place they visit.

The main question that remains here is to know to what extent the green communication of cities (and what type of) reaches people best. Globally, the fact that the local community participates in the design and setting of documents or tools such as the EMS, a local environmental charter or the city strategic plan makes them very aware of the importance of the issues, better than if they were just informed of those issues. Such involvement ("social participation") is considered more and more essential to the success of the measures taken, since it not only ensures the support from people, but also significantly change their mindsets. Events are another very interactive means. Clearly, an expert conference on climate change for instance won't reach many residents directly, but more popular events such as the car free day or the "comedies of the environment" in Montpellier have a high potential in making people understand the importance of certain environmental problems. The role of media is also important, even though it is less "interactive" than the previous means of disseminating information. The press, be it local, regional or national is likely to reach the local community and strengthen people's feeling that there are impacts on the environment for which they are partly responsible, collectively and individually, and that there are response in which they can take part. SoE reporting, booklets or postcards (addressing particular problems related to the environment), distributed freely by municipalities play the same role in raising people's awareness. However, specific tools such as environmental indicators don't have such a potential to reach people. As we have seen though, quality indicators are more likely to reach people since they often deal with their everyday life, notably the "provocative" indicators. Otherwise they don't really speak for themselves, and thus are better when integrated into an EMS or into SoE reporting for instance. EMS, beside the participation of people, benefit from a certain recognition from the general public, so does eco-labelling. The majority of people have heard about ISO standards for example, and can be proud to live in a city that has been labelled "eco-city". But the potential of such tools for local internal communication seems limited, except maybe for the municipal employees, for whom the setting of an EMS can really change the way they are working and the outcome of their actions. Moreover, employees are often residents, too.

Place identity and the sense of place of residents are also raised by internal communication, which can only be a positive result. We also know how important those values are when it comes to the

environment: people's awareness is a basic requirement for a sustainable management and development of places, as people are the main actors, the basis of every activity. a strong sense of place also implies a stronger will to protect this place, etc.

Moreover, through the satisfaction of these internal actors, it's a good image of the city that is communicated, since as we have seen before, residents or local companies act as real ambassadors of their city. External communication thus benefits eventually from a good image of the city, and so will the city itself eventually.

### 3.1.3 The anticipation of future greener demand and requirements.

This section will be brief, since it relies on the postulate and expectation that the environment will be more and more of concern for cities in the following decades. It will be so as a requirement from both the demand (in a so-called market-based system) and by law, whether it comes from international, European, or national rules. Of course it's impossible to know what the future will look like. It's possible however that if the current trend continues, the future will be much greener. The main questions that remain are: will it be equitable between countries<sup>20</sup>? And how long will it take?

In any case, in Western, developed countries, we can expect a better state of the environment, as a result of more transversal policies at all levels and in all sectors. The market could be even more demanding in terms of green products and green places to live as well. People who care for their health, their children's security, and even for the Earth's future will have severe requirements for their quality of life. The air and water they drink will have to be cleaner, the food not altered or harmful. At the same time they will care for large scale environmental problems, such as global warming or the depletion of ocean life. The city where they live will have to reflect such a way of life, providing clean air, fewer cars, green areas in and around the city, etc.

There is evidence that the current trends challenge a proactive strategy in cities to integrate environmental considerations into their work towards sustainable development and marketing plans. By doing that, cities can be better prepared to exploit the opportunities offered by an increasing environmental concern within a dynamic marketplace. Adopting as soon as now a proactive policy can therefore become a huge advantage for the city for the future, if we base ourselves on the optimistic scenario described above.

Finally, the arena of interurban competition can be favourable for cities to progress towards sustainable development. The atmosphere of competition itself is likely to stimulate cities. First SoE reporting and benchmarking can strengthen the competition. Second, prizes like "the sustainable city award" the Aalborg charter set, or the eco-label from the Lisbon conference are likely to mark the long process leading to sustainability (expert group on the environment 1996: p94), and may give more immediate meaning to the competing cities.

Another advantage that has voluntarily been omitted in this paper is the reduction of external costs the city could benefit from, by implementing environmental policies. For instance, the reduction of air pollution in the centre could make the respiratory diseases decrease and thus the welfare needed would be reduced.

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<sup>20</sup> or rather how unjust will it be? – Many countries don't and won't have any financial and technical means of controlling the environmental aspects of their activities, and dumping from developed countries could become more widespread than ever. One proof is the carbon emission rights already bought by richest countries from the poorest one. Interurban and inter-country competition is likely to marginalize even more the poorest majority.

## 3.2 Limits.

### 3.2.1 Place competition: a critic of the comparative advantages' theory.

As we have seen throughout the paper, many local economic and political stakeholders have become developers of industrial setting up. Exaggerated ideas about the importance of geographical factors and transport costs for companies' location have made them believe that anything was possible for their city. Such factors are relative depending on the type of industry. Moreover, both the attractiveness and the companies' expectations change quickly. It appears that comparative advantage of places (according to their situation and own features) have relatively shrunk, as the territorial supply was becoming strongly surplus and the firms more and more footloose and globalized. Specialisation of places has therefore decreased. Acknowledging this questions the validity of the whole thesis, which relies on the individual capacity of cities of gaining advantages from playing the "green game" and consequently –or simultaneously- being able to improve their environmental state. Beside, for the market to fully integrate environmental issues into its wheels, environmental standards should be set at an international level. Yet that's has not be done at national levels in many industrialised countries. More generally, as D. Gibbs and A. Jonas point out (2000: p309), the integration of the two policy areas (i.e. the environment and economic development), supposed to take place under the concept of "sustainable development" has been up to now rather utopian than real.

### 3.2.2 More inequalities at all levels

Urban entrepreneurialism has long been considered as a means to solve all the cities economic or social problems. As cities' competitiveness would be strengthened, there would be benefits for all the residents and local actors. Yet it is important to review the limits of entrepreneurial policies and of consequent urban marketing activities. As we have seen above, cities' entrepreneurial or growth policies haven't necessarily led to improvements, not even with regard to the economic aspects. First it has often been very costly for the city. Costs have in some cases been over the expected income. Such outcomes have eventually lowered the population's welfare, as certain items were reduced, e.g., the environment or education. Second, when such policies actually brought money, it was at the expenses of the redistribution of wealth and opportunity. There were even more injustices and the gap between the poorest and the elite that benefited from the growth widened. When jobs were actually created, they were often badly paid and precarious. As a result, social and territorial inequalities within urban areas have been exacerbated. This was especially true before the 1990's. Then there was a shift towards more endogenous forms of development. In these new forms, companies and residents have been seen more as the key to a development that would be accepted by all, rather than international firms setting up (T. Hall, P. Hubbard 1998 : pp 18-20, pp302-305; A. Jonas, D. Wilson 1999: p232-233; P. Pigeon p74).

Such discussion relates to the notion of competitive advantage. This theory, on which urban entrepreneurial policies rest on, claims that if social or environmental standards are set on a large scale, all cities will benefit from the interurban competition, since each city's own advantage will be exploited to the greater profit of all the community. Yet this theory doesn't seem to fit the interurban arena. There is evidence, when considering all the social and environmental inequalities between cities (and not only between developing and developed countries: between cities of the developed world as well), that this has not yet been achieved.

As for the "green business parks" we discussed before, their development and promotion are likely to lead to similar inequalities, on a lower scale though. Even if we can expect a great number of companies to become cleaner and cleaner, to produce less harmful goods, and use lower amounts of non-renewable resources, there will probably still be production factories that won't be classified as high-tech or green industries in the coming years (considering the consumer society we belong to). Therefore, some places will inevitably welcome such production sites, because they haven't had the opportunity to have a green business park or a dynamic university to attract high-tech companies, or

simply because they need employment and income (through taxes). The synergies we have identified could therefore have adverse effects. The environmental factor would become a major criterium likely to reinforce the attraction potential of certain places at the expense of others, eventually exacerbating the dualism between places. Such dualism would have effects on the economic, social and environmental spheres. Hence it's first the socio-economic dualism, already significant because of globalisation, that would be reinforced with all the consequences that can be feared for regions where the social balance is unstable. Second, in such regions, the environment would suffer from lacking prevention policies from both companies and local authorities.

### 3.2.3 Internal communication: waiting for a real social participation.

As we have seen, various methods aim at communicating with the local community, even though there are some recurrent means, such as messages on local TV's and radios, travelling exhibits, leaflets, newspaper articles, stickers, Internet postings and sites, etc. Marketing techniques strive to better adapt the supply, i.e. what the city can propose, to the demand, i.e. external actors' requirements. Marketing techniques are also used for communication to internal actors, notably the local community, in order to make the projects and plans accepted. This communication is of course essential in a system where transparency, public support (through political choice), or private support (through economic ways) are necessary for local authorities to work. However, it's sometimes hard to distinguish fair acts of information from manipulation of the group targeted by the marketing actions. When places or plans are being advertised rather than marketed (which implies an adaptation to the audience's wishes), then it's a different relation between the target and the municipality, which becomes more a sales representative than a public actor serving citizens.

Further, other methods are based on a consultation and even a participation of people, e.g., public enquiries, neighbourhood meetings, or the creation of a municipal organisation or department for dialogue around strategic planning issues. Usually, such methods have proven to be much more efficient in terms of knowledge acquisition, raising awareness, and of course public involvement. Social participation (i.e., public involvement) is now considered by all institutions, such as UNEP (1996) or the European expert group on the urban environment (1996) as a prerequisite for any plan, any operation carried out by a municipality, in terms of environment, housing, infrastructures, etc.

Nevertheless, such a public involvement, while more and more practised, is often a façade, or simply badly conducted because of a lack of method and legal framework. In cases where a permanent structure for communication has been set, citizens are rarely represented as individuals. Yet it's often institutions, pressure groups (green organisations, shopkeepers unions, etc.), or famous people that are actually representing residents.

Some countries have enacted and implemented laws regulating this social participation though, in order to organise it properly. J. Bouinot and B. Bermils (1995) mention two European cases:

- The "planning act" in Denmark since 1991, according to which municipalities have to carry out information campaigns, with public debate and a public enquiry.
- In Wallonia (Belgium), local authorities are compelled since 1991 also to set a structure that is partly made up of residents. This structure aims at defining the strategic orientations of the municipality, and also at drawing up projects.

Another problem relates to the lack of willingness from people regarding social participation. It's a matter of citizenship and greater individualism that can be perceived and that is peculiar to our modern society. Information campaigns then, and marketing in its societal meaning, can help raise awareness about many issues (citizenship, local democracy, environmental issues, etc.). Such a "social learning" is a prerequisite for any good social participation. Local people should be engaged in social learning during the whole process of project realisation, including the planning phase. The changes could be

that local people would acquire the tools to deal with their local problems even after the completion of the project, and also that would stimulate their creativity<sup>21</sup>.

However, the means used for such a learning phase must be appropriate for the average citizen, and avoid scientific indicators and language, especially when it comes to environmental issues. The EEA in a report promotes the integration and context-setting of environmental problems. The goal is to provide people with an information for use, for decision-making and for the increase of knowledge. That interactivity would be more efficient than the traditional model which is more partial, sensationalist, and unable to transform information into decisive, meaningful and rational action. (<http://themes.eea.eu.int/showpage.php/improvement/information?pg=39321>).

Additionally, more tailored approaches, such as “Appreciation-Influence-Control” (AIC), can be integrated within the planning phase of the projects, plans, or charters. AIC is a workshop-based technique that encourages participants to identify a common purpose and to recognise the range of stakeholders relevant to that purpose, creating an enabling forum for stakeholders to pursue this purpose collaboratively.

(<http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/sourcebook/sb02.htm>).

Hopefully though, similar methods will be used and social participation will be more systematic and well set into a legal framework, since endogenous development is more and more favoured.

### 3.2.4 The fundamental differences between public and private entities. The limits of the market.

Finally, it appears that many things differentiate between companies and cities, that make them have different behaviours vis-à-vis the environmental and sustainability issues. Urban municipalities are a good scale for implementing measures in order to reduce the global impact on the environment. Better, the urban area is a more relevant level for such measures, may it concern the public transportation system, planning and distribution of the different functions in each area, etc. Still, measures taken by local authorities for the environment are mostly answers to higher levels regulation (national and European for the most part). The national government that has ratified the Rio treaty for instance will undertake to set local agenda 21 in its cities. Then, if there is some kind of autonomy and self-government in cities, it will be up to them to actually design and implement such UN agendas 21. There will be hardly no stakeholder outside likely to pressure the city to do so, except some environmental groups or certain people involved in the municipality who are in favour of more sustainability in their city. That does not necessary mean that local authorities (local councillors or technicians) are against taking into account the environment; rather, some of them don't always see the interests of doing so. The only stakeholders we have identified that may influence the municipalities through a market system are the potential companies interested in setting up precisely in a place where the environmental quality is high, or urban tourists.

As we have seen previously in the paper, the case is somehow different in certain private companies. Many of them are under pressure from stakeholders to better integrate the environment. First the market (consumers) is demanding this concern, from the production processes to the product itself (it must be harmless for the environment, made up of renewable resources, recyclable, etc). Second, shareholders or insurers for example can avoid risks in encouraging the company to take measures for making it reduce its impact on the environment by adopting cleaner production, an EMS, etc (partly because they want it to comply with the regulation). These stakeholders, and others, have thus a direct interest in making the company getting cleaner. Beside, the law is also forcing them to adopt such environmental policies. However, the market plays an increasing role. Obviously though the companies' case mustn't be seen as the absolute perfect example. Private firms above all seek the profit. They take in some ways benefit from the “green” opportunity, which is still related to money. However, as that can also help improve their image and relationships with some of their stakeholders, they have many benefit in adopting environmental policies. So does the environment globally.

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/sourcebook/sb0100.htm#SocialInvention>

While in cities, this pressure seems lacking, except from a political and pressure groups point of view. What has been analysed from the literature doesn't allow strong conclusion over the capability of cities from a market point of view to attract "customers", that is here mostly companies looking for a place to set up, but also people doing so, or potential urban tourists. The influence of these actors on local authorities through the market seems quite weak.

There are obviously some competitive advantages local authorities could gain by disclosing the image of a green city, and in the same time taking actual measures towards more sustainability, notably for the attraction of also greener companies (synergies), an overall improved image vis-à-vis people and the media. As we have seen, the advantages in terms of internal communication, and particularly with regards to awareness raising, social participation, etc, could in fact be above that of external communication.

As we have seen, the market is on the point to solve the problem for certain private companies, or at least we can imagine that it has the power to do so (through consumerism, etc). the case seems completely different in cities, even though most of them are said to be "entrepreneurial", and function in some ways like private firms. The traditional ways that pressure firms (consumerism, interests of some stakeholder) can't be applied to places to the same extent. Moreover, such a system is in many respects unacceptable, since a city is not only an entity that produces wealth and seeks growth, but also a human system, where social interaction takes place and produces culture, technical innovation, etc, and also an ecosystem, where nature is present. A city is rather a community than an enterprise. Residents don't only work to make their city grow and gain market share, as employees in a firm. They also make it live. There is room for non monetary activities. For these reasons, it seems dangerous to imagine cities that would be managed by private actors, like the private cities in the US, guarded and surrounded by walls. Cities must remain public entities as much as possible. It is also unacceptable that, at an international scale, and a fortiori at a national scale, there is such a disparity between cities (beyond the "usual" inequalities between countries, particularly between the developing countries and the developed ones).

The following section addresses some possible alternatives to an entrepreneurial urban system, that would leave room to the social and environmental concerns, and would enable a more sustainable development of cities.

### **3.3 Alternatives.**

This section would require writing a whole thesis again. The aim of this one was in some ways to investigate "lesser evil" solutions, which, considering the ultra-liberal current system that even push cities to compete with other, to the expense of the redistribution of wealth at various scales and of the environment, can make the situation more sustainable.

This section will address the alternatives that can be found to replace or at least improve this unsustainable system of place competition, with the induced entrepreneurial and marketing policies.

#### **3.3.1 More interventionism of the national states.**

What we have seen about the ability of cities to integrate the environment into their economic development strategies enables to affirm that such an integration is far from being taken for granted. In many countries for the last two or three decades, local and regional levels have been gaining much more power. More recently they have appeared as a crucial level where changes in terms of environmental policies were expected to take place. As D. Gibbs and A. Jonas (2000: p305) notice indeed there has been a simplistic assumption that "environmental policy initiatives at the local level will effectively deal with the ecological chaos of today by creating a more rational future with local governments leading to the development of more sustainable communities, life and work styles". According to the authors quoted (Marvin and Guy, 1997) Such an integration of the environmental concerns by local authorities would even provide again cities with a "political leverage, by

reconstructing a new form of transformative local governance around the environmental agenda". As the study has strived to show, many local governments still focus on the economic development and see the environmental requirements (by the demand and above all by the law) as a different issue. In most of the literature indeed, the environment is considered as a close system, such as the economic and political system, and their interactions are rarely considered. The study has tried to analyse some of those interactions, especially through the integration of the environmental argument into the "marketing and competition of places, and through the participation/awareness of local residents.

The main question was whether local governments are able or likely to integrate and implement environmental policies by themselves, i.e. because they find advantages in doing so and not only because they are forced to. Yet it appears that there are real advantages in doing so, but by now they are still overridden by traditional arguments, that is economic development and even social welfare issues. Considering the facts above, we can wonder if a better control by national states (or failing that, other levels such as regional or European) wouldn't be an efficient way of controlling this competition between places at least within national territories. Yet such a control and redistribution mustn't be an obstacle to the positive synergies and effects we have identified (A. Caron 1995). Moreover, cities and also regions in many countries have gradually acquired more and more power and autonomy. It would be very difficult to go back to more centralised states, especially in the EU, where the integration of states and the gradual loss of power of national state has favoured the emergence of sublevels. That would be in some regions understood as a loss of democracy. Yet it has happened at a limited scale in France for a couple of years. As decentralisation has given rise to abuse, and also because of the extreme division of the territory<sup>22</sup>, the government has taken back part of the local authorities' competences, and firmly prompted them to go into partnerships with each other, especially after the laws of 1992 and 1999.

In any case, a better control by national states would enable a fairer distribution of activities. National state can mostly decide of the location of universities, some public research centres, or other public facilities or departments. However, they often have a limited influence on private firms likely to set up. What could be done though is create networks of cities specialised in the same field for instance, or networks of technopoles (A. Caron 1995), with autonomous institutions likely to redistribute money, setting up applications, etc. Such networks would avoid an useless competition and favour a better distribution of activities, wealth, people, etc.

### 3.3.2 Networking as the alternative to place competition

Common in the middle-age (Hanse notably) or even earlier, cooperation between cities has found new interests recently, as urban development doesn't only concern local stakes. Cooperation on a voluntary basis (not forced by states) is often seen as a necessity nowadays. As H. Leitner and E. Sheppard review, even firms turn to such networks, when they associate or merge together, eventually reinforcing their strength (A. Jonas, D. Wilson 1999: p233).

There are several levels of cooperation, including cooperation between a city and its suburbs (when the suburbs are located on other municipalities' territories), cooperation between cities close to each other, part of a larger "network" of cities and towns, or even cooperation between international cities. In this section we will focus on the last two (P. Noisette, F. Vallérugo 1996: pp200-204). Networks can also be created between different administrative levels (EU, state, region, city, etc) or between municipalities and other organisations such as unions, SME's, etc.

Recent policies, especially in Europe through the different Community Directorates (DG) have focused on two *a priori* opposite ways of development. First neoliberalism theories have been favoured (by DG IV notably), encouraging competition through reduced barriers between markets and limited intervention of states into private operation. Second, the EU, through the DG XVI and XI, has favoured in the same time a better redistribution of wealth between the different regions, implicitly assuming that such competition would increase social, economic and environmental inequalities

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<sup>22</sup> an archaic system with as many municipalities as in the 14 other EU members, many of them having less than 200 inhabitants.

between places. The outcome of this latter policy has been the structural funds granted to regions according to the “objective” they belong to. Another, more recent action has been precisely the setting up of networks between cities and regions within the EU (A. Jonas, D. Wilson 1999: pp234-236; J. Bouinot, B. Bermils 1995:123-130).

There are different types of partnerships thus created, with various objectives. Generally, their efficiency and interest lie in the strengthened strategic position on the market that is created by the network vis-à-vis stakeholders or competitors, and on the basis of shared experiences (benchmarking, “best practises” sharing). The most successful and complete type of cooperation, according to H. Leitner and E. Sheppard (in A. Jonas, D. Wilson, 1999: p240), are these where economic activities and their benefits are divided among members according to explicit plans. More seldom, such networks actually have a high potential in reducing all the adverse effects of place competition. There are often “thematic networks”, organised around a particular theme or objective. Those can be economic oriented networks of cities, aiming at enhance the local initiatives to challenges raised by an increasingly global economy (e.g. the RECITE network launched in 1991). There has also been networks organised around social and ethnic issues in certain suburbs (e.g. the “Quartiers en crise” or URBAN networks). The goal can also be to achieve a more efficient use of resources and more sustainable cities, which is the case for the “European sustainable cities” campaign launched in Aalborg in 1994. Communication and marketing techniques appear indeed as necessary tools for the success of such networks.

There are some critics however that can be levelled at such networking. First, when the goal is to enhance the global competitiveness, the competition is just shifted to a higher scale, and doesn’t disappear at all. Furthermore, cities of the same area that stay outside the network could significantly suffer from this dualism. Second, these networks in the European context are often set off by the EU, instead of lying on a voluntary basis (cities of course are free to join them or not, but often it’s not their initiative). Hence it’s not sure whether cities can really cooperate in the long run or not, and persist as active tools to make progress and increase competitiveness. If these networks actually continue and are active though, they can be an efficient alternative to competition, lowering their negative effects, notably the social and environmental consequences. The environment might benefit from such networks. First because competition would be significantly reduced, at least within the network scale, so would be its adverse effects. Second, the possibility of sharing experiences and practises are a good way of conveying good environmental practises, management and patterns, making cities advance more rapidly towards sustainable development. That is especially true in the case of networks structured around environmental and social concerns, rather than exclusively economic development oriented.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS.**

This thesis has attempted to address the issues related to growth and entrepreneurial policies led by local authorities in many cities. Based on varied literature, this study has encompassed a wide range of fields, such as local governance, communication and marketing techniques with regards to places and to the environment specifically, relations between cities and their potential “customers” also with regards to the environment, etc. Many problems have been raised, showing the very complexity of the systems that interact with each other. It has been difficult indeed to stay within their blurred limits, and the latter may have been overstepped in some sections.

For that reason, it would be interesting to develop some parts that could help better understand how those systems work and interact. A better assessment of the growth policies’ outcomes would be useful in this respect, especially in cities that have chosen to include the environment as a priority (both in their actions and speech). Studies addressing the territorial demand of firms could help better understand what pushes them to choose a place, according to which criteria, notably how they rank the environmental quality. Lastly this study may have neglected certain aspects that would be interesting to develop. For instance, the positive influence environmental management (not only aiming at

communicating) could have on municipal employees and eventually through this on the physical environment. As another example, urban tourism, that has been omitted, could play an increasingly important role in local authorities' will to improve the environmental quality of their city. For these reasons, this thesis's results must be taken cautiously. It's mainly doing the groundwork about the place of the environment we can expect within a -questionable- entrepreneurial management of cities, and how communication and marketing intervene in this complex system.

As we have seen, growth and entrepreneurial local policies often have adverse effects on both the environment and society, with more inequalities at all levels. This competition between cities is based on their attractiveness towards people and above all companies and investors, which depends on possible competitive advantages such as situation, fiscal system, quality of life, etc. This thesis precisely tried to highlight the place of the environmental quality (assuming that a good quality of life is partly a result of a preserved urban environment) among the other factors that are taken into consideration by potential external actors setting up. Further, in line with an entrepreneurial system, the thesis has analysed whether an innovatory approach of urban development based on such a supposed competitive advantage would be beneficial for the city, from an economic point of view and simultaneously for the environment through several processes.

The focus has been on environmental local communication and marketing, from both firms and local authorities, as they are major tools helping urban entrepreneurial management. The relation between image conveyed and actual situation in cities has been discussed, and one might assume that municipalities can communicate on the environment only if they actually work for improving its state. It's an essential condition when "upstream marketing" are insisted upon. The comparison between private companies and municipalities with regards to the environment (through communication notably), if showing many similarities, has brought up the existence of many differences, that makes impossible an application of the firms' case to that of cities.

From the analysis and discussions, one can conclude that the environment is not yet an argument and a strategic asset for a city to attract firms, organisations, or people, even though many authors mention it as an increasing factor. There are certainly some advantages in displaying a green image for a municipality, such as the synergies that can arise between private and public actors, the positive influence this communication can have on the local community, or the advance the authorities may take vis-à-vis future environmental requirements or interests. The municipalities focusing on the environment may therefore benefit economically from that choice, and it is likely that their environment would be improved.

However such potential advantages have their own limits, and the system of competition itself is very questionable. It actually raises several paradoxes: growth induces an increasing impact on the environment; competition raises social, economic and environmental inequalities. A steady state is obviously to be preferred to the endless pursuit of growth. This market system seems therefore not to be appropriate to places at all. Yet the temptation exists to say that competition stimulates innovation and therefore might make cities choose the "green opportunity" that is often seen as booming. First the environment as a component is still not that prevalent for cities. Second the physical environment wouldn't necessarily benefit from such an option, except on a local scale in some places. To conclude, it is unlikely that leaving this system to the market rules will promote the environment as a real opportunity, guaranteeing the conditions for a social and environmental sustainable development of places. There has to be some control at higher levels to reduce this competition or create equal conditions (through standards) for it to take place. Networking in this respect appears as an interesting solution.

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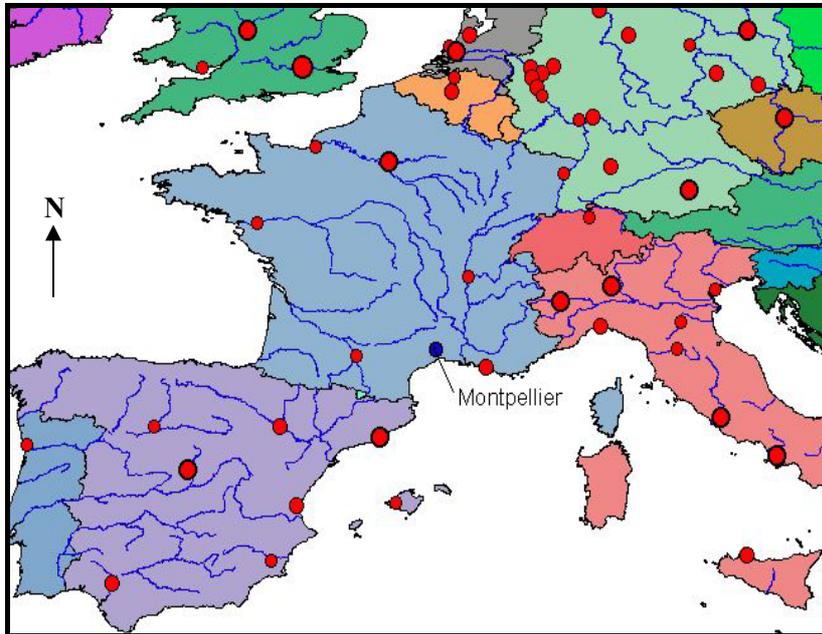
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## APPENDIX 1 : PRESENTATION OF MONTPELLIER



map 1: situation of Montpellier.

Montpellier is a French city located close to the Mediterranean sea, 10 km from the sandy coastline, and just in the foothills of the Central Massif, and particularly near the Cevennes National Park. There is therefore a great and varied natural environment surrounding the city, with Mediterranean vegetation around, calcareous scrublands and humid beech, and chestnut trees on the higher slopes.

The urban area is about 350000 inhabitants, and the city is the administrative capital of the “Languedoc-Roussillon” region. Montpellier has been the fastest growing large city in France for 40 years, with 100% of population growth. The population is young (36% under 25) and highly qualified, with the highest ratio students/population of the country (23%). It’s a very dynamic city that attracts both high tech and services enterprises, and students, although it has no industrial past, appearing as an avant-garde post-industrial city. The main fields of specialty are: information and communication technologies, biotechnology and the health sector, agronomy and the environment.

As for the environment, the city has led many actions aiming at reducing its impact. These actions encompass waste separation programs, public transportation development (buses and tramway since 2000), awareness raising programs, green areas development programs, etc.

Montpellier has been one of France’s most dynamic and earlier cities to lead actions of promotion and development. In the 1980’s, marketing actions were rather targeting external investors. Then since the 1990’s, this communication has been reoriented partly towards an internal communication, with the objective of involving people into the city projects, as shows the new slogan “Montpellier, our city”.

Different actors are involved in the communication of the city. First the municipality itself has a distinct communication department. Second the district (intermunicipal organisation grouping the urban area’s municipalities) also has an internal communication service. The latter is very active with regards to external communication since the district is in charge for the management of the technopole. It also carries out many actions of communication towards the local community, especially in the field of waste separation, public transportation, etc, as these are some of its competences. The SERM<sup>23</sup> is another major actor that helps a lot promote the city, through the various projects it brings into play (such as the tramway, in cooperation with the district).

<sup>23</sup> Société d’Equipe ment de la Région Montpellieraine (half public/private company responsible for building facilities and infrastructure in the region of Montpellier)