

## Editorial

Philippe Lavigne Delville

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# Editorial

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*Philippe Lavigne Delville*

## *1991-2016: APAD is 25 years old!*

In March 1991, a group of European and African researchers and development practitioners came together to form APAD, rooted in several principles: an empirical approach to development far from normative debates and with the desire to describe and analyze practices and thinking as close as possible to stakeholders; a determination to promote “development” as a legitimate subject for anthropological research and as an indicator of contemporary processes of social change in a globalized world; and the ambition of holding both critical and constructive dialogue with practitioners. Add the principles of North-South balance and promoting young researchers and you have the ingredients for a 25-year adventure that reached well beyond the borders of the association and has marked social science research on “development”.

Three hundred members and supporters in Africa and Europe, 44 issues of its journal, 12 international conferences, 16 collective books drawn from these symposiums and/or co-published by APAD, all form the track record of an original scientific association that has been able to diversify its subjects and teams while remaining faithful to its principles. It’s a safe bet that this will continue for the next 25 years!

## *Fabricating public action: the Cotonou Conference*

Co-organized with the University of Abomey Calavi’s Laboratory for Analysis of Dynamic Development (LADYD/FSA), IRD, and LASDEL, with the support of the International Public Policy Association (IPPA), the French National Research Agency’s APPI project<sup>1</sup> and Benin’s Ministry of Evalua-

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<sup>1</sup> “A Fragmented Public Action? Production and Institutionalization of Public Action”, a research project funded by the French National Research Agency (ANR): <http://www.gret.org/wp-content/uploads/VF2-appi-actes-web.pdf>

tions, APAD's 12<sup>th</sup> International Conference brought together nearly 120 people in Cotonou from November 17 to 20, 2015, in a stimulating and convivial atmosphere<sup>2</sup>. It aimed to shift focus upstream from projects and field actions to policy formulation, and foster synergies between the socio-anthropology of development and the sociology of public policy.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my warmest thanks to our financial partners (Swiss Cooperation Office in Benin, the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands in Benin, Agence française de développement, the Belgian Embassy in Benin, IRD, UAC) and the organization committee, who made this conference a huge success both scientifically and logistically.

The conference scientific accomplishments will be showcased in our next issue and the following issues. A writing workshop will be held in Cotonou in September 2016 for the doctoral students and young researchers from Africa who presented papers at the conference.

### *APAD extending its geographic scope*

During its General Assembly, APAD updated its articles of association and decided to broaden its geographic scope. The term "Euro-African" corresponded to the founding pact of an association that wanted to bring together African and European researchers around the analysis of development facts in Africa, rather than an association of European researchers working on Africa. This is now a reality strongly rooted in the dynamics and membership composition of the association. However, the term "Euro-African" is sometimes poorly understood outside the association. The topics promoted by APAD are not specifically African, far from it: papers on Vietnam, Mexico, Bolivia and Cambodia presented at our recent symposiums are clear signs of this, and such vantage points are useful to understand social change and development. The General Assembly therefore decided to remove all geographic references and change the name of our association to the "*Association pour l'Anthropologie du Changement Social et du Développement*" (*Association for the Anthropology of Social Change and Development*).

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<sup>2</sup> Visit the Symposium website: [www.apad-association.org/colloque-2015](http://www.apad-association.org/colloque-2015)

Covering Peru, Italy, Malta and Vietnam, this special issue illustrates the usefulness of these broader horizons for our thinking. Happy reading!



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