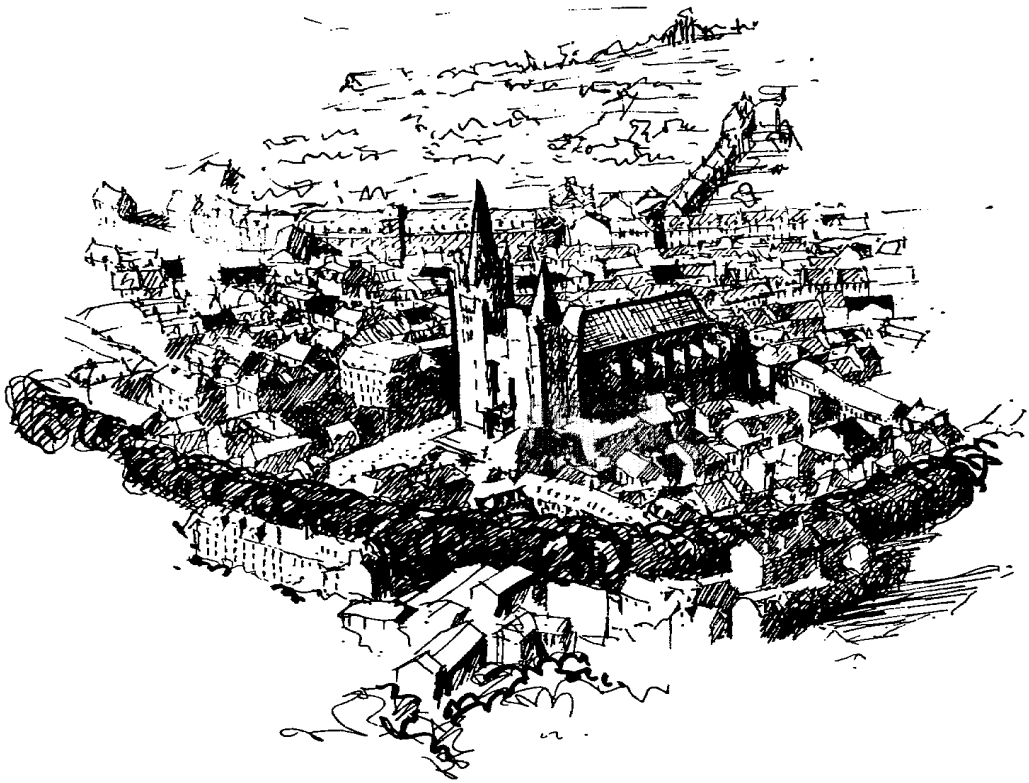


Managing Urban Social and Economic Issues in France

Mende



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A Study of Managing Urban Social and Economic Issues in France Case Study of Mende

Teachers' Notes

- Since the 1980's France has had a national policy to tackle the problems that face deprived social housing estates inherited from extensive post-war urbanisation.
- Mende is the prefecture (principal) and the most populous town in Lozère. This unit investigates what strategies have been used to combat urban inequality within this small, but important town.
- Mende is combining these regeneration strategies with those of "sustainable development" (Developpement Durable) and examples of this are studied within this unit.
- Time restrictions generally mean that it is only possible to carry out detailed surveys within selected key areas of Mende.
- Detailed analysis is made of contrasting residential and retail areas within the settlement.
- Urban fieldwork involves the students working in groups away from direct supervision. It is suggested that the day is broken down into a series of time slots and the groups meet up with staff regularly. A central meeting point for emergencies is a good idea and students should be shown this before departing on the study.
- The urban study is designed to give students
Case study material
Fieldwork investigations
A variety of methods of collecting, presenting and analysing data (including statistical testing).

Reference texts:

INSEE (2000) *'Recensement Général de la Population de 1999'*
Ministere des Affaires etrangeres 'FRANCE'

Byrne, Pointon, Warren & Yates (2008) *"Edexcel AS Geography"* Pearson

Warn, Dunn, Holmes, Hordern, Oakes & Witherick (2008) *"Edexcel AS Geography"*
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General Information

Understanding Urban Deprivation

Social, economic and environmental inequalities occur in all urban areas, and great contrasts in wealth, opportunity and deprivation can be observed over small distances. There are a number of reasons why the wealthy and poor tend to concentrate in different places:

- **Housing.** Houses tend to be built in different areas with a particular market in mind. Since wealthier groups will have more choice in where they live this tends to be in areas with some advantage (access, environment etc) and away from poorer areas.
- **Change over time.** Urban areas are constantly evolving. Areas that were desirable 150 years ago on the edge of the town may now be absorbed by growing development. Thus the large middle class family houses of the 19th century become sub-divided flats for lower income groups. Alternately, former lower class and industrial areas are infiltrated by richer groups and gentrified.
- **New Migrants.** Migrant groups often come into a new country in search of better economic opportunity. However, low and unskilled workers may only find low-paid jobs and without any previous base only be able to afford the cheapest and lowest quality housing. Also migrants from a particular country often concentrate in the same area.

The result of this is distinct spatial distribution of wealth and opportunity. This can be seen in all the traditional urban land use models (such as Mann's) where different classes of residential areas are distributed around the urban area. The result is one of social segregation which can lead to social polarisation and social exclusion.

Reducing urban inequality

The management and reduction of urban deprivation has a number of strands and levels. There have been many E.U, National and local schemes aimed at reducing deprivation, but increasingly these have been aimed at enabling and empowering people to take greater control over their lives.

French Urban Regeneration Policies

France is now very much an urban society although areas such as Lozere retain a strong rural identity. For the past twenty years French urban policy has been aimed towards providing solutions to disadvantaged areas and the segregation experienced by their residents. This has been by both responding to specific crisis whilst trying to reduce the most glaring disparities between neighbourhoods.

The aim of this urban policy was to provide residents of deprived neighbourhoods with normal life, jobs, pleasant quality of life and access to public services similar to other inhabitants. This would help tackle the problems of crime, insecurity and intolerance.

Origins and History

France has had a national policy since the 1980's to tackle the problems that faced deprived social housing estates inherited from the extensive post-war urbanisation. These estates were largely built in the 1960's to cater for increased housing demand within urban areas.

Developed within the suburbs of many French towns these could accommodate, in some areas more than 4000 dwellings. As with the UK France experienced rapid urban growth and redevelopment within the 1960's, backed by increased rates of immigration, especially from Algeria. In 1956 the Courant plan called for the construction of 240,000 residences annually, much of it **HLM** (*habitation a loyer modere*) or "housing at a moderate rate". These often took the form of large complexes built by a "*chemin de grue*" (way of the crane) and were thus perfectly rectangular. There are now around four million such residences in France, housing an estimated 14 million people.

However the economic crisis of the 1970's created high unemployment and the exodus of more well off residents, leading to a concentration of deprivation and areas of social exclusion within these estates.

1981 – 1988 The establishment of an urban policy

Public disorder highlighted the increasing instability within these neighbourhoods, leading to a number of initiatives by local authorities. In 1984 the "developpement social des quatriers" (the social regeneration of neighbourhoods) produced a contract between the state and region. The measure aimed to prevent urban, economic and social deprivation within 148 urban areas.

1988 – 1993 The State takes a lead

A minister for urban affairs was appointed and a legislative framework created in order to generate a "droite a la ville" (rights for the city). A series of agencies was established specifically to deal with the problems of social exclusion.

1993 –1997 The first contrats de ville

Increasingly public authorities focus actions upon the wider urban areas to allow the integrated comprehensive development of the city. The implementation of urban policy was achieved through "contrats de ville" which were designed to increase the efficiency of public intervention. These were agreed between the state and local partners to give a framework for urban and social projects.

1998 – 2007 A new objective for towns and cities

Emphasis for urban policy was focussed on four themes: crime prevention, employment, economic development and urban regeneration. In 2000, 247 contrats de ville had been implemented and a new initiative the grands projets de ville (covering the entire urban area) introduced. These ran for a period of 7 years and had a budget of 5.4 billion euros.

2007- 2009 The Contrat urbain de cohesion social

Changes to European Objectives funding reduced the poulation of France available for assistance. To allow for this a new urban regeneration policy was created. These urban contracts for social cohesion focus on five priorities: access to jobs and economic development, improving housing and the environment, educational success and equal opportunities, good citizenship and crime prevention and access to healthcare. 201 regeneration projects for 355 neighbourhoods, covering over two million residents, have been drawn up. 182,000 dwellings are being renovated and 84,000 social housing units being built (there are currently over 4.2 million). Over the medium term, agreements for €30 billion worth of works, including €5 billion funded by central government, have been signed.

ZUS Zone urbaines sensibles

Many of the initiatives outlined above are aimed at the Zone Urbaines Sensibles (ZUS) or critical urban areas. These were designated in 1996 as areas with particular urban problems and are mainly the areas of social housing constructed in the 1960's and 70's, with most major urban areas containing them. There are currently 751 ZUS inhabited by around 5 million people (7% of the population), mainly immigrants and young people. In-spite of the urban regeneration projects outlined above, many of these areas are considered to be “no go” and outside of French government control!

Mende

Mende is the largest town within the rural department of Lozere. As the prefecture it plays a major role within the department, the Mende area having a population of 17000 or about 22% of the total for Lozere. The town itself has a population of nearly 14,000 (13,899 in 2006) which has grown (figure 1) in contrast to much of the rest of the department. The population is also young by comparison with the rest of the department, 25% are under the age of 20.

Figure 1

Population change in Mende 1881 - 2006									
1881	1901	1921	1936	1954	1968	1982	1990	1999	2006
7202	7319	6109	6499	7752	9713	10929	11286	11804	13899

The town also represents the centre of decision making, commerce, transport and employment within the department. It also has about 25% of the economic activity and 40% of the employers within the department.

Recently Lozere and Mende have been promoting themselves as places with both a good quality of life (rated amongst the highest in France) and low unemployment 6.8% (one of the lowest in France).

However, within Mende urban inequality does exist and recent urban regeneration initiatives have been aimed at reducing this inequality. One of the key areas in the Contrat Urbain de Cohesion Sociale is the Quartier de Fontanilles.

Fontanilles

Within Mende the Fontanilles area represented a large open space to the east of the town, with sufficient space for the construction of a number of housing blocks, but away from any flood risk, relatively close to the centre and with good access to the N88 and N106. The initial project called for 450 rental residences, 413 in flats and 37 in terraced houses, with 50 places reserved for repatriated families from Algeria. A commercial centre was also included within the plan. The project was a co-operation between the “Societe Mixte Mende-Fontanilles” (SAIEM) and the societe Cooperative HLM de la Lozere (now SA Lozere). The project started in 1961 with buildings E,F and G (120 residences) and building H (50 residences) in 1963 built by societe HLM. A further 116 residences in buildings A and B were constructed by SAIEM. However 92 of the planned properties were replaced by a maternal school within the centre of the quartier. In 1972 37 villas and 20 houses were also constructed on the edge of the development, together with a private nursery and community centre. In 1973 tower K was finished, whilst in the 1980’s and 90’s land to the north was sold for private developments. Finally in 1993 15 individual houses were constructed as HLM.

The quartier currently contains 905 properties (15.5% of the total in Mende) and 2179 people (18.5% of the population). The area provides accommodation for a number of distinct groups:

As well as the original Algerian families, Fontanilles has attracted migrants from Portugal and more recently North Africa and Turkey. In 1999, 1090 (nearly 10%) of the population of Mende were migrants (727 Portugese), with a high proportion living in the Fontanilles area.

Migrant children make up a high proportion of the Fontanilles schools (30% in the public maternal school, 27% in the primary school).

It is an area for young couples before they purchase their first house.

Contains families with low incomes.

It is seen as an important location for new arrivals to Mende and Lozere.

Figure 2
Comparison with Mende and ZUS in Languedoc-Roussillon (1999)

	Fontanilles	Mende	ZUS for the Region
unemployment	11.9%	6.8%	38.1%
Under 25's	38.1%	31.8%	38.1%
Non-Diploma	23.9%	16.9%	39.1%
Single parents	20.6%	11.2%	26.7%
HLM Housing	88.7%	17.3%	52.3%

Aims

- **To carry out an environmental and housing survey within contrasting areas of Mende.**
- **To assess the success of French Urban regeneration projects within the Fontanilles area of Mende.**
- **To investigate the creation of the ZAC (Zone d'activite Concertee) de Ramilles and its impact on retail services in Mende.**
- **To evaluate issues of accessibility within Mende centre and the ZAC Ramilles .**

Safety

Mende is generally a safe town to visit however a few safety points should be considered. Students should take care on roads especially where there are no pavements.

Wednesday afternoons and public holidays should be avoided as this is when most young people are liable to be around the town.

Alcohol, knives, fireworks, BB guns etc should not be purchased.

Police in Lozere have a low tolerance on drugs especially amongst young foreign nationals. Since this exercise will involve visiting some of the most deprived areas of Mende the following are recommended whilst in these areas.

Avoid working in large groups

Be sensitive the feelings of locals

Although photographs are a useful fieldwork tool, be aware of local feeling when taking them.

Visit at sensible times of the day (around midday when parents are collecting children from primary schools is good).

Be prepared to leave the area if necessary.

Method and Organisation of Study

- For each area examined carry out an Environmental and Housing Survey (Survey 1)
- Evaluate the success of the regeneration scheme (Survey 2)
- Carry out a shopping and environmental quality survey in the centre and ZAC Ramilles (Survey 3)
- Carry out a service survey in the centre and ZAC Ramilles (Survey 4)
- Carry out a disability access survey in the centre and ZAC Ramilles area (Survey 5)
- Carry out a questionnaire of shoppers opinions in Mende (Survey 6)

Survey 1 Environmental, Housing and Deprivation Audit

The use of a bi-polar scale allows for a value to be given for quality and appearance. Bi-polar means that a scale is being used to indicate the extremes and a range of standards in between.

Add any other factors that you feel might be important.

Street Environmental Quality						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Poor quality housing						Good quality housing
Heavy Traffic						Light Traffic
Ugly derelict land						Tidy, well kept area
Heavy industry						No industry
Litter and vandalism						Clean and tidy area
Noisy						Quiet
Poor pavement condition						Good pavement condition
Lack of street lighting						Well lighted area
Parked cars on road						Off road parking
Untidy play areas / gardens						Well kept play areas / gardens
Poor air quality						No air pollution
TOTAL SCORE						

Property Quality Survey						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Multi-story flats						Detached property
Building opens onto street						Garden or driveway
Missing roof tiles						Well maintained roof
Broken windows / frames						Undamaged
Poor paintwork						Well maintained paintwork
Litter and vandalism						Clean and tidy area
Structurally dangerous						Structurally sound
No parking available						Garage
Untidy play areas / gardens						Well kept play areas / gardens
Multiple land uses						Exclusive residential area
Properties overlooked						No overlooking
No burglar alarm /safety						Number of safety features
TOTAL SCORE						

Accessibility and Service Survey						
	1	2	3	4	5	
No park / public space						Close to park /public spaces
No primary school						Close to primary school
No health care facilities						Good access to health care
Poor access to shops						Good access to shops
Poor range of shops						Good range of shops
No public transport						Range of transport options
Poor disability facilities						Good disability services
TOTAL SCORE						

Material and Social Deprivation						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Overcrowded						Comfortable
Households without cars						Multiple car households
Lack of basic facilities						Multiple facilities
No garden						Large garden
High % unemployment						Low % unemployment
High % of single parents						Low % of single parents
High % of dependents						Low % of dependents
High % pensioners						High % pensioners
TOTAL SCORE						

Index of Burglarity

	House	Retail
Provision of burglar alarm	10	10
External security lighting	5	5
Security camera	10	10
Security system (eg guard or dogs)		10
Metal bars or shutters on windows/doors	5	10
Access from open space	-5	-10
Quiet street	-5	-5
Evidence of vandalism	-5	-10
TOTAL SCORE		

Survey 2 Urban Regeneration in Fontanilles

As part of the Contrat Urbain de Cohesion Sociale de Mende, 9 initiatives have been implemented that will run from 2007 to 2009.

Theme	Action	Agent	Cost (euros)
Surroundings and quality of life	A study of the range of social housing in the Fontanilles area	Ville de Mende	30 000
Surroundings and quality of life	Renovation of the buildings in particular the oldest blocks (371 residences).	ESH Lozere Habitation	10 078 946
Surroundings and quality of life	Construction of a new sports and open area to the East of the quartier.	Ville de Mende	150 000
Surroundings and quality of life	Free transport for students of the Fontanilles schools (275 students) into Mende.	Ville de Mende	5000
Surroundings and quality of life	Increasing the size of the crèche from 100 to 130.	CCHV & CCAS de Mende	560 000
Surroundings and quality of life	Work on sound proofing and insulating buildings. (116 residences in AB)	SAIEM	381 000
Access to employment/ economic development		ESH Lozere Habitation	
Improving Education	Integration of immigrant children into local schools.	Ville de Mende	
Citizenship and crime prevention	To work with young people to improve road safety, addictive substance abuse, integration of difficult young people, equality between sexes and parental education.	Ville de Mende	24 000

How might the success of these schemes be evaluated?

Urban regeneration at the ZAC Ramilles

In 1997 it was decided to create the **ZAC (Zone d'activite Concertee) des Ramilles** as a Commercial Retail Area that would allow Mende to compete with other regional towns such as Millau, Rodez, St Flour and Rodez. It was not designed to compete with the regional centres of Clermont Ferrand and Montpellier. The site covers an area of 12 hectares is located on the flood plain of the River Lot, adjacent to the RN.88. The initial project completed in 2003 was for the parking area, a Hypermarket (the first in Lozere) and a McDonalds (the only one in Lozere). The success of the scheme meant that the Hyper U expanded from 1,700m² to 2,800m² by September 2005. Later editions to the scheme included a service station, Briconautes and But stores (2007) and finally the commercial hall and extra parking opened in May 2008.

Plans exist for the scheme to create a golfing area and children's playground accessible from the parking area. The scheme is also part of a longer term plan to divert the RN.88. away from the centre of Mende and to the north of the town. The initial part of this can be seen with the construction of the new viaduct providing better access from the RN .106. coming in from the north of the department.

There has however been some local opposition to the scheme. The location has been criticised as it is within the flood zone of the River Lot (as defined in the Departmental Hazards Plan). A number of measures have been taken to overcome the problems of this (these can be investigated by students who are studying flooding). It is also located on a steep slope with potential for mass movement and again a number of measures have had to be undertaken to mitigate this.

However, perhaps the greatest protest has come from those who feel that this scheme will have a negative impact upon the central area of Mende.

Survey 3 Urban Shopping and Environmental Index

This index is designed to examine whether variation exists between areas within a settlement in terms of its shopping quality and environmental quality. This will give a quantitative rather than a qualitative assessment. The area is broken down into a series of factors and each one scored on a scale of 0 – 10, with the lower score representing a poorer environment.

Shopping Quality

Access to Shops	Score
Free parking/or bus close to area	10
Pay to park close to area	8
Have to walk more than 200m	5
Have to walk more than 500m	0

Types of Shops	Score
Mainly comparison goods	10
Wide variety	5
Mainly convenience goods	2
No Shops	0

Shop Building Quality	Score
All well maintained	10
Generally good repair	8
Scruffy	5
Very poor condition	2
Derelict or no shops	0

Quality of Goods	Score
High quality/ high prices	10
Low quality/ low prices	2
No shops/ no goods	0

Number of Shoppers	Score
Crowded	10
Large numbers	7
Moderate numbers	4
Few people	2
No people	0

Total Shopping Quality Score (0 to 50)	
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Environmental Quality

Litter	Score
Completely clean, no litter	10
Some litter, not obvious	7
Some litter, obvious	4
Extensive litter, obtrusive	0

Traffic safety	Score
Pedestrian Street	10
Restricted vehicle access	8
Light traffic	6
Heavy traffic, with crossings	3
Heavy Traffic, no crossings	0

Paving Condition	Score
Good state of repair	10
Good, In need of repair	7
Poor, In need of repairs	4
Ver Poor, damaged badly	0

Noise	Score
No obvious noise	10
Some noticeable noise	7
Obtrusive noise	3
Intolerable noise	0

Graffiti	Score
No graffiti on any surfaces	10
Some graffiti, not obvious	7
Some graffiti, obvious	3
Very extensive graffiti	0

Total Environmental Quality Score (0 to 50)	
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AREA: TOTAL SCORE: OTHER COMMENTS:
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Survey 5 Disability Access Survey

Working as a group students will move from the parking area to the main shopping area. Within the group you should imagine that you have a number of mobility or disability problems.

Carry out an audit of your journey from the parking area to the shopping area.

Examples of Mobility or Disability that may affect access to an area.

- **A single person with 2 young toddlers and a push chair.**
- **An young person moving with the aid of crutches.**
- **A person in a wheelchair with an assistant.**
- **A person in a mobility buggy without an assistant.**
- **A blind person without an assistant.**

Example: *Within the car park the surface is very rough and uneven, the car parking spaces are very narrow. On exiting the car park the kerbs were very high, even at the road crossing points.*

Survey 6 Shoppers Questionnaire (English version)

Good Morning/ Afternoon.

I am a Geography student from _____ and am carrying out research on shopping within Mende. Would you please answer a few questions?

1. Where do you live?

Mende	Within Lozere	Other France	Other (specify)
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2. How did you travel here today?

Walk	Bicycle	Bus	Car	Taxi
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3. What is the reason for your visit?

Shopping	Work	Tourism	Other (specify)
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4. How often do you visit?

Every Day	2-3 times a week	Once a week	Once a month	Less than once a month
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5. What do you like about this area? Please rate it from 1 to 5.

	Very Poor 1	Poor 2	Average 3	Good 4	Excellent 5
Quality of shops					
Range of shops					
Easy access					
Clean and tidy					
Safety					
Attractive Environment					

Thank you for your time!

Survey 6 Shoppers Questionnaire (English version)

Bonjour Monsieur/Madam. Je suis étudiant(e) Britannique et je fais une enquête géographique à Mende. Auriez-vous la gentillesse de répondre à quelques questions?

1. Où habitez-vous?

Mende	Lozere	Autre Departement (le quelle?)	Autre pays?
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2. Comment avez vous voyager d'ici?

À pied	A vélo	Autocar	Voiture	Taxi
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3. Pour quelle(s) raison(s) etes-vous ici d'au jour d'hui?

Shopping	Work	Tourism	Other (specify)
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4. Combienes de fois est que vous visitez de Mende?

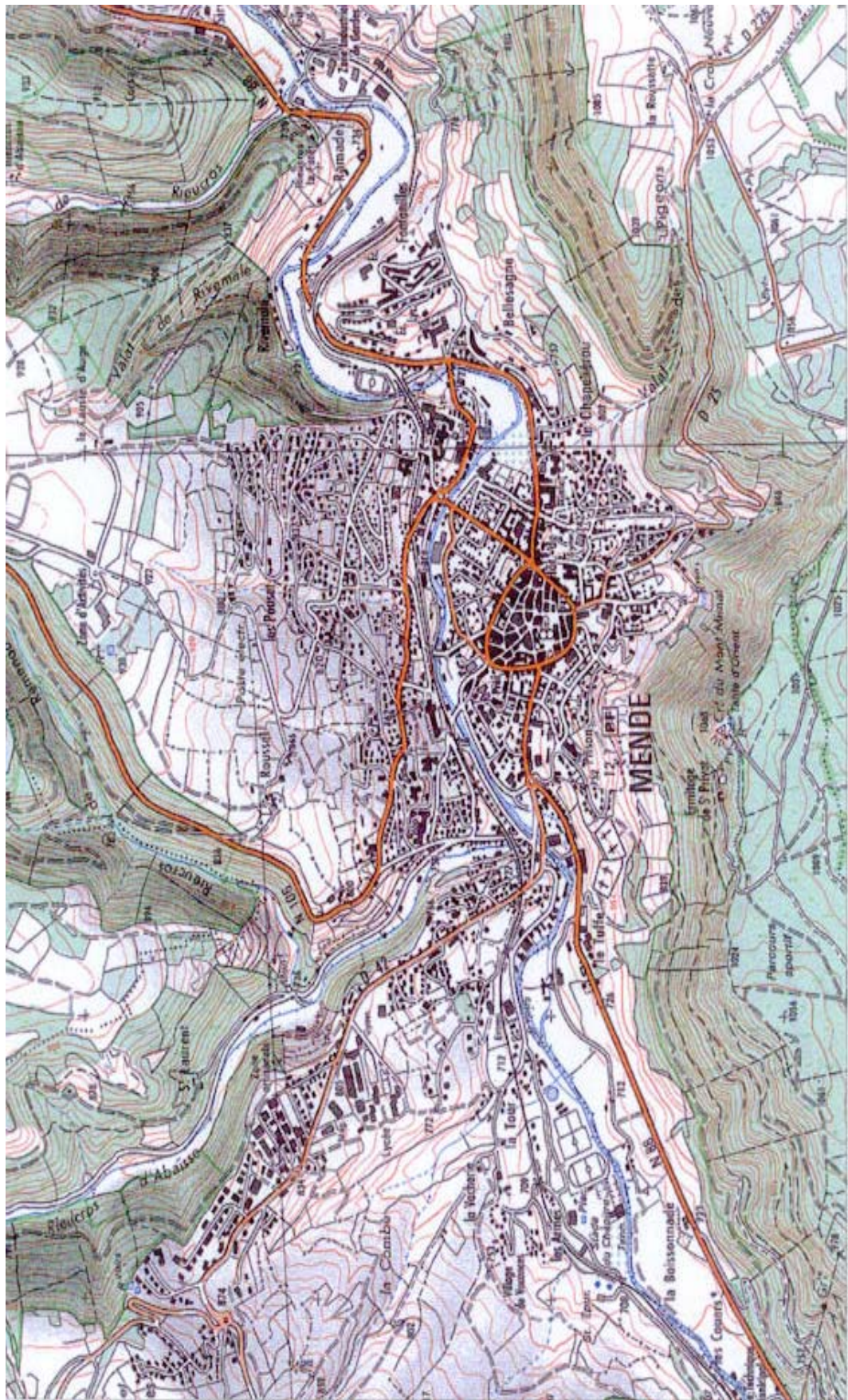
Chaque jour	2-3 fois par semaine	1 fois par semaine	1 fois chaque fois	Moins que 1 fois chaque mois
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5. Qu'est que vous bien aimez a Mende? Marque des points entre 1 (meilleure) et 5 (mauvais) au dessous :

	Very Poor 1	Poor 2	Average 3	Good 4	Excellent 5
Qualitee des magasins					
Choix des magasins					
Facilitee d'access					
Propre					
Securite					
Environnement intéressant et charmant					

MERCI BIEN POUR VOTRE ASSISTANCE





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Appendix 1 – Photographs illustrating the historical growth of Mende

