

## Heritage mediation, a component of territories sustainable development

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### Introduction

We hope this publication will highlight the contribution of heritage mediation in a policy of territories sustainable development, becoming at once an element of identity, social cohesion, attractiveness, influence, territorial communication and economic development. This thinking is part of a territorial intelligence approach that seeks, as advocated by JJ Girardot, "to improve understanding of the structure and dynamics of territories". (Girardot, 2002) To support our demonstration we will focus on a specific area of heritage mediation we will call Ahvp<sup>1</sup>. This sector has the particularity to unify in one practice all systems and processes that characterize mediation heritage: culture, economy, preservation and conservation, and involvement of residents.

### Mediation heritage and sustainable development

*The specific elements of sustainable development in heritage mediation*

The development is considered sustainable if it is designed to ensure the earnings sustainability based on social equity, economic efficiency, and environment improving. We based our thinking on several scientific works like those of the socio-economist Ignacy Sachs (Sachs, 1974) regarding the Rio declaration<sup>2</sup>, and specific recommendations for sustainable development of cultural and/or heritage products advocated by Jean Pierre Lozatto-Giotart for tourism and Jean Jacques Girardot for territorial intelligence. According to this work we could identify that the concept of sustainable development applied to heritage has three interrelated viability dimensions: cultural viability ie the preservation of local culture and heritage and the development of cultural practices; economic viability ie job creation and wealth generation; social viability, ie social cohesion and improving quality of life.

Basing our work on these concepts we can describe a kind of recursive pattern where practices and heritage mediation consequences are interwoven into each other.

### Cultural viability

#### *Heritage: an identity support*

A territory is characterized in part by its historic buildings, its traditions, "its specialties", ie its heritage, its expression or presentation. Giving cohesion to the territory, heritage defines it by its mere presence (through the castle, the costume, the language, the animals ,...) and thus distinguishes it from surrounding areas who do not possess it, who do not use it or do not practice it. The construction of representations that define territories is inseparable from the identities construction. As Fernand Braudel wrote in *l'Identité de la France*,

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<sup>1</sup> Living History: designation given by the author. This name combines spectacular animations with actors, in costume, evoking a historical fact in a place designated as "heritage" such as "son et lumière", historical celebrations, dramatized visits

<sup>2</sup> In 1992, during the Earth Summit in Rio, 150 nations have signed a common agenda for the 21st century (Agenda 21) on three interrelated clusters of sustainable development: reasoned economic development, environmental respect and cohesion and social equity.

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"a nation can "be" only by identifying to the best of itself, consequently to recognize itself in the images and passwords known by insiders." (Parent, 1991) Stories and local singularities carrier, heritage legitimates the identity community image, its mediation reinforces its role of the territory history crystallization, and allows to formalize the contours of identity which allow to a population to recognize itself. Corollary it promotes a sense of belonging development, a feeling which is at the heart of territory development approaches and local authorities concerns. (Gwiazdzinski, 1997) Thus, mediation heritage constructs, generates, structures and conserves identity. It structures identity by putting it into narrative, it builds it by the choice of subjects, their choice of representation and writing, it preserves it by perpetuating it. Mediation heritage makes that the population, in uniting around the project, recognizes that heritage, elects it as an icon of the territory, and begins to save and thus to preserve it.

### ***Cultural heritage reappropriation and preservation***

Heritage can be regarded as an inheritance, an accumulation of tangible and intangible assets that are gradually built and passed on to the community. (Lamaison, 1987) Therefore we must preserve the heritage, and through its mediation, allow a reappropriation by the inhabitants. To be permanently saved, heritage must continue to live, to have a function, it has to answer to a contemporary needs and ensure its economic viability. Yann Bertacchini and Marie-Michele Venturini noted that heritage which is not valued nor shared may disappear. Its mediation allows to preserve this heritage, and so its memory. Victor Scardigli notes that "the local memory remains a source of identity". (Scardigli, 1993) Thus, preserving and transmitting that memory, heritage mediation preserving the local identity.

### ***Cultural development and cultural practice***

Any act of mediation heritage belongs primarily to the field of culture and its practice has cultural significance in itself. Philippe Dechartre in its report *Les événements culturels et leur environnement sociologique* notes that the role of cultural events is eminently social, the public is mostly regional or local. He precises their role in the territory cultural offering proposed by saying "they bring to the local public cultural performances that often, they could not see." (Dechartre, 1996)

## **Economic viability**

### ***An economical full sector***

The different forms of heritage mediation are most often paying activities, dependent on supply and demand and integrated into the economy in the area of goods and services. These events became objects of consumption are an important economic resource and are presented as an economic full sector, having "traditional economic factors" such as the ability of labor, mobilizable capital and direct and indirect benefits. (Bertacchini, Venturini, 2004)

### ***The direct and indirect effects***

**Direct:** The events generate benefits through direct sales, job creation, expenditures for the organization and production of the event, and tax revenues.

**Indirect:** The indirect benefits represent expenditures which, without being necessary to the conduct of the event, are generated by it as in the case of catering for example. These benefits also apply to indirect jobs created or retained by suppliers or subcontractors. Finally these economic actors mobilize their incomes to consume and invest, pay their taxes,...

Similarly, the indirect benefits also applies to spectators who came particularly for the performance and may easily turn into tourists in deciding to extend their stay to enjoy the charm of the city or the surrounding area and then consume outside the time of the event.

### ***Local effects mean sustainable effects for the territory***

Another advantage of these events, is that the economic benefits are primarily local. A study commissioned by the Ministry of Culture in 1986 estimated that expenditures for cultural events enjoyed for two thirds to local trade. (Laferté, 2000) It's the same thing regarding the employment, benefit is mostly to local economy because it's essentially recruited local jobs in the municipality or/and in neighboring departments.

### ***Attractiveness, influence: "Success attracts success"***

More than a source of income itself, historical events generate financial returns generated by a gain of public image. According to analysis by Guy Saez we must relativize the economic benefits of heritage, and integrate economic pendings in a second level and, reporting the remarks of an elected representative, he wrote: "it no longer says "heritage will bring in tourists", we have to say now "heritage will make us a public image that will make businesses relocate, and also bring tourists. We say now in the second degree that heritage is a tool for development, but indirectly." (Saez, 2007) This impact is then undoubtedly economic, even if it does

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not really result from direct action of the event. Attract residents and businesses, it's also capture purchasing power, which will benefit to local businesses and create jobs. A cohesive society, dynamic and active improves territory image and attractiveness. Thus, this influence generates economic activity.

### **Social viability**

#### *Residents participation*

Citizen participation, mentioned in Principle 10 of Rio Declaration, is a prerequisite for sustainable development. The resident population has an essential role, because without its cooperation, it's impossible to establish an effective development policy.

#### *Evolution of associations environment in the cultural field*

Enlargement of "thematic fields, chronological and spatial of heritage" (Gravari-Barbas, 1995) resulted in a change in the number of cultural associations and especially those interested in heritage. On 10 million of volunteers, 41.6% are members of a cultural association. Thus, the vast majority of structures carrying heritage projects are non profit organizations. According to our research on a survey involving 173 heritage events, over 96.50 % of them are organized by this kind of structure<sup>3</sup>.

#### *Social cohesion*

Whether the logistics, the figuration, the creating scenery or costumes, the promoting, the use of volunteers is massive. Residents are then mobilized with a view to participate in a collective effort to create the animation of local life. The population contribution in developing this animation through workshops involving all social differences, whether socio-professional, age or sex, creates the link from the coexistence within the community and thereby promotes social cohesion. Thus, among the text presentation or justification on their sites, the majority of non profit organizations notes the creation of link established between the participants as Hurionville for example. They highlight even its ability to "find solidarity and brotherhood too often forgotten." These meetings made around a common project "allow [to many people] to get out of their isolation and to discover unsuspected talents. They realize that together we can achieve great things." (Flagnac)

#### *Territory solidarity*

##### *Insertion and access to culture*

The territory solidarity expressed through the willingness of some non profit organizations to promote social insertion of disadvantaged people. This can be achieved by establishing partnerships with local integration centers and may be done by very different methods: the insertion associations working in the area of green space, production and routing of mailings to promote the show, insertion sites, ... This solidarity is also expressed through a desire to promote "access to culture for people who are excluded". This access is often encouraged through free places offered to certain categories of people by a particular agency (Regional Council, General Council, Community of Communes,...) or the structure itself.

#### *Integrate people*

These events may also allow the assimilation of newly settled populations. In the associations statements of intent we found many times the concept of "integrating factor". "The pageant was created to integrate uprooted people who feel a need for history<sup>4</sup>." The fact to contribute to the development of these performances allow to participate in civic life and becomes a way for newcomers to build a social identity. Integrating the living history project developed on the territory, the newcomer gives to the whole population a further guarantee of its desire for integration into their new place home.

#### *A local resource*

Finally the real sustainable aspect of all forms of heritage mediation is based on the fact that it still relies on a heritage item and then hypothetically "no de-localizable" as says Claude Origet du Cluzeau. (Origet du Cluzeau, 1998) It is a unique offering, induplicable. This notion of induplicability registered it in sustainable development, its low susceptibility to fads and fashions, but moreover its originality make this object deeply rooted in the territory in every sense of the term. Mediation heritage therefore draws in local ressources, in

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<sup>3</sup> Non profit organizations found in various forms, ranging from theater groups to events committees, associations of merchants or even cultural committees.

<sup>4</sup> « It is also a factor of integration for newcomers and their families », *Les médiévales*, Les-Arcs-sur-Argence.

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the territory that is "composed of meaningful elements" such as note Yann Bertacchini and Eric Boutin to build an identity and a link support of solidarity. Simply "heritage is a vector of local development because it is composed of local resources" human and material.

### Conclusion

We've demonstrated through this study that the synergies created by heritage mediation improve the artistic, cultural and territorial development. This cultural development crystallized around cultural heritage allows it to better fit into a global culture project throughout the territory, and is an effective way to enrich the local cultural offerings. Moreover, by giving a function, a purpose to heritage, mediation allows its conservation, restoration and hence its sustainability. "We must protect the resource to ensure future development itself. (Chassande, 2002, p 9, Delayer, 2007) We could then see that the practices associated with heritage mediation have a direct economic impact by contributing to the local economy by creating jobs, but also indirectly due to attractiveness induced by the image of dynamism and strong identity of the territory. This attractiveness promoting the installation of firms, creation of wealth and so improvement of living populations. We could finally realize in what way living history is a part of a process of sustainable development by encouraging the involvement of the population. With the involvement of volunteers, these events are fully engaged in community life and promote an inter-generation and inter-socio-cultural mixing which contributes actively to the development of social cohesion. Heritage mediation in forging a regional identity is a construction of men, inseparable from the heritage legacy and culture, and according to Bertacchini, it's the starting point of a possible emergence of "formal territorial capital" and firmly anchored in a sustainable development perspective. (Bertacchini, 2006) Through these practices, the meaning is to improve the emergence of a collective memory and transformative force, which, while relying on people, their knowledge and history, allows to create projects into a territorial integrated dynamic and therefore sustainable. To conclude we emphasize that any act of heritage mediation product is concrete projects within the meaning of the latin etymology of the word "the result of a grow-together of a develop-together."<sup>5</sup> (Berque, 2000) Heritage through its mediation is then a territorial cement which can serve as an anchor to many development projects thus contributing to territories sustainable development.

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<sup>5</sup> The author recalls that the word "concrete" comes from the Latin *concrecere*, which means "growing together": he believes in the "growing up-together of the becoming-humans, in the becoming-words and in the becoming-things". BERQUE, Augustin, *Écoumène : introduction à l'étude des milieux humains*, coll. "Mappemonde", Belin, Paris, 2000.

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