The cultural dimension of territorial intelligence, state of the art, case of cultural heritage

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Abstract: A new field of research and experimentation is the cultural dimension of territorial intelligence, which means the analysis of the cultural conditions of a sustainable development. Theses conditions are at least cultural diversity and social cohesion. Some significant works have been done concerning the link between culture, territory and identity; cultural diversity is very often considered from the point of view of cultural industries, but it must refer firstly to different people living in the same territory. A very important question is how diversity can be taken into account in the field of heritage and cultural wealth. After his very important work about « places of memory », Pierre Nora explains that there are three ages of the national heritage in France (but it is true elsewhere).

In the first Era (before 1980), the aim was to take inventory of exceptional and outstanding monuments and masterpieces of art and architecture.

After 1980, it was admitted that cultural heritage had to be enlarged to landscapes, but also to all human kinds of culture, including local heritage, minorities heritages, oral tradition and intangible culture (such as Unesco does for the list of world heritage).

Since the beginning of the new century, because of digital technologies, everything can be conserved, everything can be added to common heritage, like billions of photographs available on the web.

This re evaluation of what we call cultural heritage has consequences on identities, and also on the link between culture and development. More and more, economists take into account the value of immaterial assets. It can be also proven that cultural heritage can be a source of local development and social cohesion. But local actors could work more efficiently if they had tools able to mobilise cultural resources in local developments projects. It could be a track for discussion in Enti Program.

1/ A new field for research and experimentation.

Very few works have been done on the cultural dimension of territorial intelligence, that we could define here as the analysis of the cultural conditions of a sustainable development.

In the same time when globalization has made perceptible the limits of natural resources and environmental pressures, it has created new threats on local culture. The more cultural industries provide cultural goods to more and more people, the more these people feel a loss of identity, a threat on their values, with all observable consequences: xenophobia, nationalism and regionalism, religious or ethnic conflicts, and so on… this reconfiguration of identities is emerging in a post colonial context, that's to say in a period in which occidental civilisations have redefined their link with the rest of the planet, admitting that their cultures are neither universal, nor unique, but particular and diverse. Everybody, even in rural areas has to face this reality and learn to live now in an open world with other people. At this point, most occidental countries have made an effort to accept cultural diversity.

The respect of cultural diversity could be considered as a first condition of sustainable development.

In France, as in most of countries in the world, the re definition of identities due to globalisation, but also to the primacy of individual values, and to the general movement of cultural relativism made necessary a re-evaluation of its relations to the rest of the world. It is trivial to mention that this movement was more difficult and painful in France because of the republican ideal, which makes unthinkable the simple idea of difference: the French Constitution does not recognise groups, communities, minorities, nor religions…

In response to the differences perceived, cultural politics have taken into account more and more singularities and distinctive identities. This explosion of groups, minorities, may generate conflicts and threaten the national cohesion. The common interest could disappear in favour of communities interests (ethnic, religious, …) when the national cohesion is not strong enough to contain all theses centrifugal forces.

So another cultural condition of a sustainable development is the construction of values that allow to live together, what we could call social cohesion. There is no possible social cohesion without a feeling of belonging to a same civilisation, with common values. This is not a "national identity", but a common basis for living together. This feeling is possible if two conditions are fulfilled: education and culture must be both more accessible for all. This does not mean that everybody must have the same education and the same culture, but there is a mainstream in Europe to stop multiculturalist approaches and prefer an intercultural approach in which particular cultures are in interaction to build a common culture.

In the field of ecology the interactions between level of diversity and level of coherence have been modelized . This is not the case in cultural studies.

Enti program would have to discuss about the human dimension of sustainable development, that is to say how cultural diversity and social cohesion are making human societies more secure, more adaptable and more rich, how respect of cultural diversity is a common and shared value, generating a new common culture. This is also an economic value (more creativity and more ability to adapt for cultural "smugglers").

Since the UNESCO convention[1], Cultural diversity has been studied from a theoretical and practical point of view. But a majority of works are very often considering diversity from the point of view of cultural industries, but it must refer firstly to different people living in the same territory.

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[1] Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

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2/ Is Culture a level for territorial development?

The topic of the place of culture in territorial development is essential.

A concrete discussion is how to mobilize cultural capital of a territory / region in a development project. Can the feeling of belonging help the local project or is it a dangerous ethno-centric regression? How this feeling is modified by global recomposition of identities? It would be helpful to evaluate interests and risks for different categories of actors to let culture, identities and territories be enslaved by local governments?

What relations between culture and power?

In France, some significant works have been done concerning the link between culture, territory and identity (Rizzardo, Saez, 1995); Even if the cultural policy is traditionally enacted at a national level (French ministry of culture) a lot of works have been done since French decentralisation, regarding local cultural policies (Observatoire des politiques culturelles, Grenoble).

Another field of researches would be culture and local development. Is there a correlation between cultural capital and social inclusion? Between level of instruction and economic development? François Matarasso showed that practicing artistic activities has a positive influence on social inclusion. Most of surveys made in France concern urban exclusion. But an interesting question would be the exclusion in rural zones, and the impact of information technologies in these areas.

The Nancy II University[2] pointed that culture is becoming a central resource for building an identity and a support for attractivity in a context of concurrence between local authorities. More and more local governments want culture to help economical development. Local authorities are becoming agents of a new "culturisation" of territories, with new forms of cultural productions (festivals, events…) creating new attachments to territory and new experiences of belonging to a local territory.

Moreover, Cultural development may become a direct level for creating economical values. In France, the survey conducted by jean-Louis Lasnier (FIGESMA) in the Languedoc Roussillon Region is very instructive. The aim of that work was to evaluate from a quantitative and qualitative point of view the economical importance of cultural heritage in that region, characterized by the weight of tourism[3]. We must learn three lessons from that local research:

1/ Heritage Economics is basically in a long term range with the following skates:

preservation

promotion

creation

dissemination

education.

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[2] centre de recherche sur les médiations.

[3] 15% du PIB (fifteen percent of gross domestic product) 100 millions nights/year

2/ Heritage activities contribute to social cohesion, but also to the "feeling of belonging" to a local community. It creates jobs that cannot be off shored. Finally, it develops touristic attractivity with a lot of induced effects.

3/ What are the direct or indirect effects of cultural Heritage?

In 2006, cultural heritage represents:

- 14,8% of touristical economics

- 18 400 jobs (3,8% of regional job market)

- 1,46 billion € sales (0,44 directly), 2% of market production

- 203 millions fiscal revenue for 75 millions subsidies (about 3 € for an expense of one €).

Source: Figesma (2008)

It is obvious that cultural diversity is concerning all kinds of arts and creation industries, but as heritage is directly linked to territory, it is particularly interesting to give a focus on that topic.

3/ Heritage and cultural diversity:

Regarding territorial intelligence, a very important question is how diversity can be taken into account in the field of heritage and cultural wealth. After his very important work about « places of memory », Pierre Nora explains[4] that there are three ages of the national heritage in France (but it is true elsewhere).

1. In the first Era (before 1980), the aim was to take inventory of exceptional and outstanding monuments and masterpieces of art and architecture.
    a. In France, the inventory of historical monuments was decided in the 19th century, but took mainly into account buildings related to official or religious power.
    b. In 1964, the general inventory was extended to all artistic works
    c. At the same period was created the museum of popular arts and traditions (Georges Henri Rivière).
2. After 1980, it was admitted that cultural heritage had to be enlarged to landscapes, but also to all human kinds of culture, including local heritage, minorities heritages, oral tradition and intangible culture (such as Unesco does for the list of world heritage).
    a. In France in 1980, only 12% of French people could define what is the meaning of the word "patrimoine" (heritage)
    b. The same year was created the "heritage direction" in the French ministry of culture;
    c. In 81, the missions of the ministry of culture were extended to the "preservation of national but also regional and social heritage". So, cultural policies not only include the "human masterpieces", as said André Malraux, but also all the "human cultures"

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[4] Pierre Nora, conference at the colloque of the cinquantenaire, French Ministry of Culture, Opéra Comique, Paris, October 14th 2009.

      d. This widening of what is considered as heritage creates an inflation of patrimonies, of cultural capital, including the recent historical period (industrial heritage) and new immaterial categories (with the anthropological sense of the word culture).

      e. The notion of "places of memories" was introduced by Pierre Nora in 1984.

3. A third era is beginning with the new century. Because of digital technologies, everything can be conserved, everything can be added to common heritage, like billions of photographs available on the web.

      a. In 2006, Unesco Convention on the intangible heritage

      b. Hypertrophy of heritages since everything can be digitalized and preserved, and promoted.

Pierre Nora insists on the fact that this metamorphosis of the concept of heritage has inverted its meaning:

- From specimens it became ensembles
- From exceptional, it became quotidian
- From Historical it became memorial
- From National it became social

There is a conservative drive facing a feeling of loss. But it is impossible to keep everything. Choices must be done, but political ones… Jacque hainard said that the power of legitimating the heritage is a political stake.

The "social" heritage takes diversity into account and allow recognition of minorities and victims. It may be a source of social cohesion but also of conflicts (memories against memories). The inflation of heritages creates new field of emotional experiences, but also of fights for appropriation.

We must admit that we are no more in a stock heritage, but in a new flow heritage.

The local actors have now a responsibility: hard drives allow to memorize everything and networks to share, disseminate and promote any heritage. But what to choose again, and how to invent cooperative processes of production? The challenge is not to design new internet portals for local numeric heritage. The new strategy is to disseminate contents on social networks that have a very important traffic. For instance, a lot of museums have now their page on facebook or youtube. Anne Frank page on youtube, created some weeks ago, had 8 millions visits on its first week because you can watch on line the movie archives of the Anne Frank Museum.

Territorial intelligence tools could help local actors to mobilise local cultural heritage through information technologies.

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4/ Conclusion

This reassessment of what we call cultural heritage has consequences on identities, and also on the link between culture and development. More and more, economists take into account the value of immaterial assets. It can be also proven that cultural heritage can be a source of local development and social cohesion. But local actors could work more efficiently if they had tools able to identify and mobilize cultural resources in local developments projects. It could be a track for discussion in future Enti Programs.

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