

Are great touristic sites vectors of sustainability? Insights from two French mounting areas' case studies (Montenvers-Mer-de-glance and Bibracte- Mont Beuvray)

Chiara PIAI and Emmanuel SALIM

SHNB



SOCIETAT D'HISTÒRIA
NATURAL DE LES BALEARS

XVII INTERNATIONAL COLOQUIUM
ON TOURISM AGE-IGU



Piai, C. and Salim E. 2020. Are great touristic sites vectors of sustainability? Insights from two French mounting areas' case studies (Montenvers-Mer-de-glance and Bibracte-Mont Beuvray). In: Pons, G.X., Blanco-Romero, A., Navalón, R., Troitiño, L. and Blázquez-Salom, M. (eds.). Sostenibilidad Turística: *overtourism vs undertourism*. *Mon. Soc. Hist. Nat. Balears*, 31: 171-186. ISBN 978-84-09-22881-2. Palma (Illes Balears).

The critical studies of tourism, encompassing both anthropological and geographical insights, provide the theoretical background and foundation of our proposition. Thus, our approach aims to de-naturalize tourism, which is to deconstruct it as a natural object and reconstruct it as an historical and political one, in order to show its complexity and the contradictory effects of its contemporary development. We drive a comparison of two case studies of great touristic sites in France, the Montenvers-Mer-de-Glance, one of the most visited glacier sites in the Alps and the Bibracte-Mont Beuvray archaeological site, the less visited among the great touristic sites labelled "Grand Site de France", located in the Central Massif region. For these two case studies, we analyse the discourse produced by stakeholders, notably sites' managers. To assess the way that these touristic sites can be considered as vectors of sustainability, we use a qualitative methodology including in-depth interviews with key stakeholders (public and private's actors) and analysis of official documents and promotional materials from the touristic sites.

Keywords: *sustainability, tourism, great sites, environmental change, mountain.*

¿SON LOS GRANDES SITIOS TURÍSTICOS VECTORES DE SOSTENIBILIDAD? INFORMACIÓN DE DOS ESTUDIOS DE CASO DE ÁREAS DE MONTAÑA FRANCESAS (MONTENVERS-MER-DE-GLACE Y BIBRACTE-MONT BEUVRAY). Los estudios críticos del turismo, que abarcan tanto los conocimientos antropológicos como los geográficos, proporcionan los antecedentes teóricos y el fundamento de nuestra propuesta. Así, nuestro enfoque tiene como objetivo desnaturalizar el turismo, es decir, deconstruirlo como objeto natural y reconstruirlo como objeto histórico y político, para mostrar su complejidad y los efectos contradictorios de su desarrollo contemporáneo. Llevamos a cabo una comparación de dos estudios de caso de grandes sitios turísticos en Francia, el de Montenvers-Mer-de-Glance, uno de los sitios glaciares más visitados de los Alpes, y el sitio arqueológico de Bibracte-Mont Beuvray, el menos visitado de los grandes sitios turísticos que llevan la etiqueta "Grand Site de France", situado en la región del Macizo Central. Para estos dos estudios de casos, analizamos el discurso producido por los interesados, en particular los administradores de los sitios. Para evaluar la forma en que estos sitios turísticos pueden considerarse como vectores de sostenibilidad, utilizamos una metodología cualitativa que incluye entrevistas en profundidad con los principales interesados (agentes públicos y privados) y el análisis de los documentos oficiales y el material de promoción de los sitios turísticos.

Keywords: *sostenibilidad, turismo, grandes sitios, cambio ambiental, montaña.*

Chiara PIAI, Laboratoire EDYTEM - UMR5204 Université Savoie Mont-Blanc Bâtiment "Pôle Montagne" 5 bd de la mer Caspienne F-73376 Le Bourget du Lac Cedex. Emmanuel SALIM, Laboratoire EDYTEM - UMR5204 Université Savoie Mont-Blanc Bâtiment "Pôle Montagne" 5 bd de la mer Caspienne F-73376 Le Bourget du Lac.

Manuscript reception: 10-june-2020; revision accepted: 21-july-2020.

Introduction

From the seminar theme, we retained the section: questioning about sustainable tourism. Keeping this in mind, we questioned our fields. We put them in common in order to identify some “good to think” matter and some questions into being. Here is one first and quite general but still important methodological perspective we adopted: “ask the field and compare” and, as anthropologists like to say it “ask the practice”. One is geography of glacier tourism, whereas the other is socio-anthropology of place branding. Glacier tourism research deals with the site of Montanvers, one of the biggest and most visited French Alpine glacier sites. Place branding research deals with Bibracte-Mont Beuvray, labelled Grand Site de France and thus recognized by the French state as one of the most important French patrimonial sites¹. The mont Beuvray is located in Burgundy, in non-Alpine mountain area geographically related to the Central Massif².

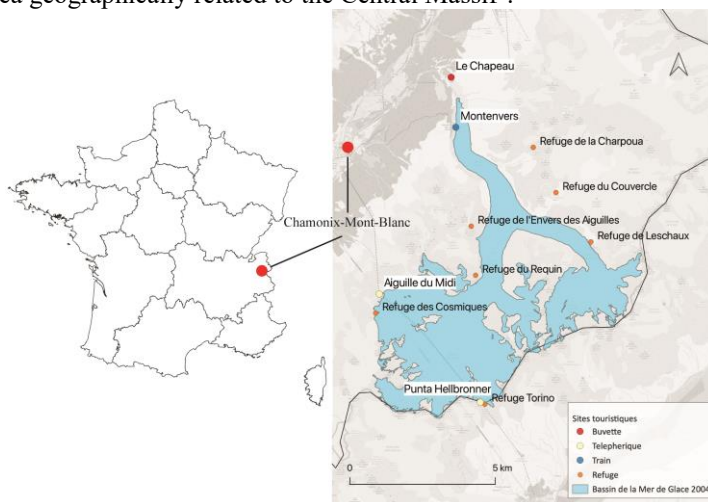


Fig. 1. Location of the Mer de Glace basin (France) and the Montanvers site in the heart of the Alpine Arc/

Fig. 1. *Ubicación de la cuenca del Mer de Glace (Francia) y del sitio de Montanvers en el corazón del Arco Alpino.*

¹ Taking into account the fact that France is the first touristic destination in the world, besides their each one specificity these sites are emblematic of big touristic destinations of an international character.

² The Central Massif is one of the six “massif zones” identified in metropolitan France by the Mountain Low of 1987 revised in 2016: Vosges, Jura, Alpes, Massif Central, Pyrénées and Corse.



Fig. 2. Main view of the Monteverns site (August 2019), by Emmanuel Salim.

Fig. 2. Vista principal del sitio de Monteverns (agosto de 2019), por Emmanuel Salim.

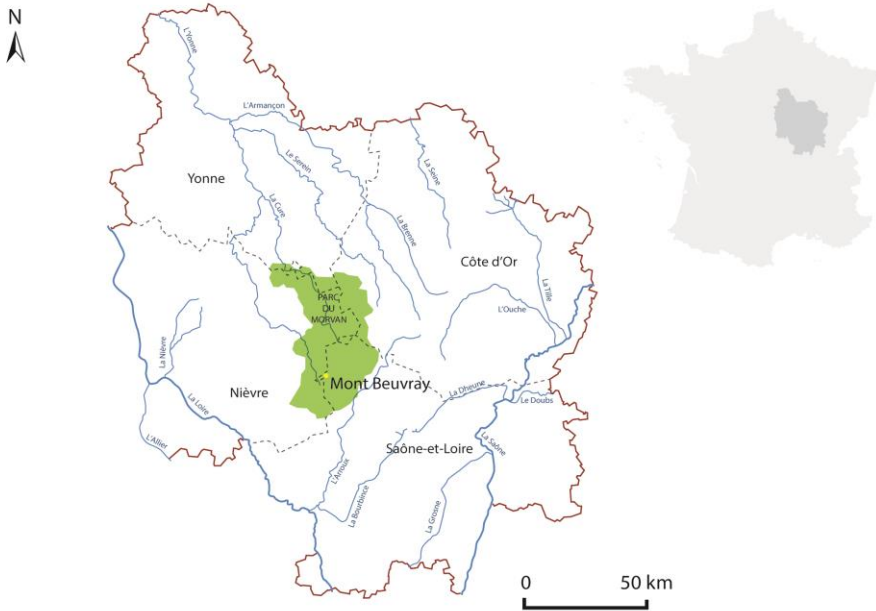


Fig. 3. Location of the Morvan in the Burgundy region (France) and Site of Mont Beuvray.

Fig. 3. Ubicación del Morvan en la región de Borgoña (Francia) y el sitio de Mont Beuvray.



Fig. 4. Main viewpoint of the Mont Beuvray Site, by Chiara Piai.

Fig. 4. *Mirador principal del sitio del Mont Beuvray, por Chiara Piai.*

Those two fields (and fieldworks) have different things to say about sustainable tourism, whereby our first question (as in the title): are great touristic sites vectors of sustainability? A first general assessment concerns the fact that nowadays a great variety of non-homogeneous actors of any kind refers to “sustainable tourism” (public actors, small and big private firms, individuals, associations, international organizations, etc.) to the point that its meaning is now as comprehensive as it is vague. As a consequence, the way actors “interpret” sustainable tourism is just as much important as the formal definition of it³ in order to qualify the social phenomenon which are associated to it in practice (Olivier de Sardan 1995). We found these circumstances worth adopting a pragmatic perspective, so we went on asking: how sustainable tourism (as an item of discourse) is mobilized within the more general existence strategy of the mobilizing organism? What which role does it play in the organism’s global economy? In order to answer to this question, first of all we are going to make some general considerations about the notions of tourism, sustainability, strategy and the economy which we employ. They have complex and diverse meanings depending on the context, and we want to make sure that we all agree about what we mean by them before starting the discussion. After that, we will present the principal choices we had to make in terms of methodology. Next to which we will talk about our results and finally conclude with some research perspectives which seem interesting to us to carry out upon our results.

³ The world tourism organisation defines sustainable tourism as : “*a tourism which fully takes into account its economic social and environmental impacts present and forthcoming, in responding to the needs of visitors, professionals, of the environment and of the hosting communities*”.

1. Positioning, methodology and analytical grid

1.1 The critics to “sustainable” “tourism”

The formula of “sustainable development” is both much employed and very much interpreted. Moreover, this notion is exposed today to two distinguished orders of the criticism. As a form of “tourism”, it is exposed to the critics of those who consider that tourism as such is not a sustainable activity (Bourdeau 2011; Christin 2014; 2018). Thus, some authors describe the “tourism industry” contemporary drifts (and so extending previously existing critics about the “cultural industry” and the commercialisation of culture, cf. Baudrillard & Mayer, 1996; Debord, 2018[1967]) and they warn about the excessive development of this economic sector, which entirely relies on the circulation (massive and on a global scale) of people, things and money (Abélès, 2008)⁴. The concept of “sustainable tourism” developed precisely starting from this kind of assessments. As calling “sustainability” into question, “sustainable tourism” is exposed to the critics of those who consider that the “sustainable” has become a label emptied of its original distinguished meaning, which is no more respectable by the only means of its existence. As to say that nowadays, when we put up that we do it “sustainably”, that’s not enough anymore: we still need to prove it by facts⁵. So, the notion of “sustainable” “tourism” identifies a quite uncomfortable crossroad. These critics encourage us to adopt a pragmatic perspective toward the problematics of the sustainable tourism and so to ask how this notion connects to actual strategies in practice.

1.2 The advantages of considering sustainable tourism as an element of a larger strategy of local development

To us, the advantage of adopting a “strategic” and the “actor oriented” perspective (Olivier de Sardan 1995; Long 1977; 2015) to the study of local development relies on the fact that its conceptual tools are flexible and well adapted to the features of our case studies, and it is well suited to show their specificities and what they have in common (see Fig. 5).



Fig. 5. Conceptual tool diagram of the "strategic approach" or "actor oriented"/

Fig. 5. Diagrama de herramientas conceptuales del "enfoque estratégico" u "orientado a los actores".

⁴ The recent global sanitary crisis did nothing but straightening this kind of critics (see the number of articles about the crisis of the tourism sector and economy published by Le Monde between the end of April and the end of May 2020, and available on the Internet site of the newspaper: www.lemonde.fr).

⁵ In the Mont Beuvray region, this problematic is recurrent, especially among stakeholders in the forest management sector. Public operators, environmental associations, managers of forests of outstanding beauty, but also other occupants acknowledge the gap they perceive between what’s “sustainable” in theory and practice. Generally speaking, they don’t appreciate this gap.

Moreover, the advantage of considering sustainable tourism as one element within a larger and more complex strategy lies in the fact that that is the reality as it is observable on our research fields day by day. In each field, sustainable tourism appears in practice as being grounded in a more general economic strategy is implemented by the great touristic sites managers in query.

1.3 Comparing touristic sites' economic choices

We have come to consider sustainable tourism as a sub strategy, belonging to a larger strategy that we refer to as an “economic” one. But, just in the same way as for that of “sustainable tourism”, the notion of the “economy” is polysemic and gives rise to diverse interpretations (both in theory and in practice). Amongst these, there are some anthropological and sociological approaches of the economy which underline the plurality and the variability of the practices and representations characterizing this field of the human activity. From the ancient Greek *oikonomia*, which can be translated as “the rules of inhabiting and managing the household within its environment”, it becomes “survival” and “projection into the future” (Narotzky and Besnier, 2014), “life worth leaving” (D. Graeber, 2001; David Graeber, 2013), “enrichment” (Boltanski and Esquerre, 2017), “neoliberal norm” (Dardot and Laval, 2010), etc. other anthropologists insist on the diversity of the social logics that characterize the becoming of our contemporary world, in tension between the “local” and the “global” (Kilani, 2012; Agier, 2013). Following these authors, we make the hypothesis that this might be true for sustainable tourism as well, seen as an element of a more general economic strategy, which brings us to ask the following question : how do the sites' managers use sustainable tourism within their economy (considered in the enlarged sense anthropologists borrow to it) ? So we are going to use the notion of “economy” in a methodological and exploratory, non-normative sense, and we are going to engage with the way the actors encountered characterize “their” economy, in order to qualify the place that so called “sustainable” tourism occupies within it according to them. In order to answer to this question, we are going to compare two case studies, which we correlated starting from different aspects: first of all, the trajectory of construction of the value of each touristic site in exam through time; then the way in which managers promote and “communicate” the touristic sites beyond their physical frontiers (style and contents); finally we studied the managers' vision of local development, as the members of the organizations express them. For doing so, we base on field observations and discourse analysis⁶ stemming from different materials (promotional materials, official documents and “grey literature”, field notes and semi-directive interviews).

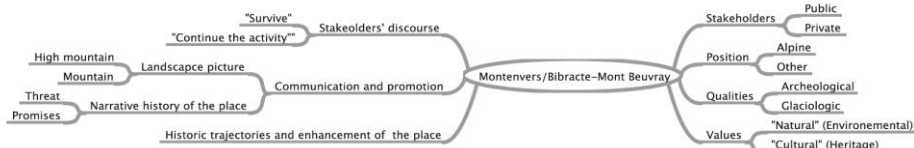


Fig. 6. Comparison grid.

Fig.6. Cuadrícula de comparación.

⁶ For a general perspective concerning discourse analysis, see (Maingueneau 2014)

2. Results: differences and common aspects between the two sites (similar trajectories of valorisation and modes of communication and promotion, different qualities and socio-economic logics in act)

2.1 Comparing the chronologies of construction of the two sites' value: different contents, but similar trajectories: accumulating signs of recognition

Today, Bibracte-Mont Beuvray is an archeological site presenting a (natural and cultural) patrimonial interest, recognized at a national level by multiple quality labels and marks. Among these, it is labelled "Grand Site de France", a patrimonial-environmental label which "has been created from the State to grant the excellence in the management of sites of outstanding interest, big notoriety and strong frequentation, to which applies the national Great Site policy"⁷. This site has the particularity of being the smallest touristic destination among the French Great Sites. Nevertheless, it still remains a relevant destination in terms of size, the average visitors/year rate being of 80,000. Montanvers is a great glacier touristic site which owe its interest on the surrounding landscape, which includes the biggest French glacier, and also to its internationally recognized cultural qualities (UNESCO). 11-km-long and with an area of 30 km², the *Mer de Glace* is the third glacier of the Alps after the Aletsch and the Gorner glaciers located in Switzerland (Fischer *et al.* 2014). The tourism on this glacier is structured between three major sites: the *Aiguille du midi* reachable by a cable car (3842 m a.s.l); Montanvers, where a railway cog takes visitors to a viewpoint on the glacier tongue; and the *Punta Helbronner*, accessible from the Italian Vallée d'Aoste and where a cable car lifts people up to a summit 3462 m a.s.l high (Fig. 2). The *Mer de Glace* is also the only way to access seven different high mountain huts (Mourey and Ravanel 2017). In this case, what makes the greatness of this touristic site is the volume of the visits: the touristic flows in the valley of Chamonix Chamonix-Mont-Blanc (France) is one of the most popular mountain destinations in the French Alps. In 2017, 4.7 million nights (45% in summer and 55% in winter) are spent in the Chamonix valley (Salim *et al.* 2019) by tourists coming from all over the world (49 % of the visitors are foreigners)⁸.

Today, both sites are well known great touristic destinations; but this hasn't always been the case. The today notoriety of these sites is the result of a long-lasting accumulation of practices and signs of recognition through time. In the case of the mont Beuvray, the trajectory of construction of the site's value shows that this first was an "habitat", an "oecumene", an inhabited place⁹. And more precisely, an *oppidum* (Gallic fortified town). The history tells that there Vercingetorix was confirmed at the head of the Gallic coalition against the Romans in 52 before J.C. and there also Jules Cesar finished to write the *De Bello Gallico*. In Fig. 7 we can see that already in modern times, and moreover in contemporary ones, the site value is attributed in turn to so called "natural" and/or "cultural" qualities of it (Peyrache-Gadeau *et al.*, 2016).

⁷ See : "Règlement d'usage du label GSF", <https://www.grandsitedefrance.com/label>.

⁸ Data from the Chamonix Tourism Office (interview with the Director, April 2017).

⁹ Concerning the "the inhabiting" perspectives in the inquiries around space, place, territory and identity, see the geographer Augustin Berque and also the anthropologists Tim Ingold and Philippe Descola.

Today, by making a selected synthesis of the past, the valorisation of the site is made upon what is currently conceive of by the site managers as a continuum of natural and cultural qualities, as shown for instance in the expression “historical site of outstanding symbolic value [...] benefiting of an exceptional landscape” (See *Dossier de renouvellement du label GSF*, 2013, p. 5). But at the same time, the mont Beuvray is also a multi-use site, namely shared between archaeological activities, farming and tourism. On the visitors’ side, the Beuvray is mostly frequented by contemplative hikers and ramblers, non-rarely fond of history, which locate it as a destination for cultural tourism as well as for “nature based” tourism.

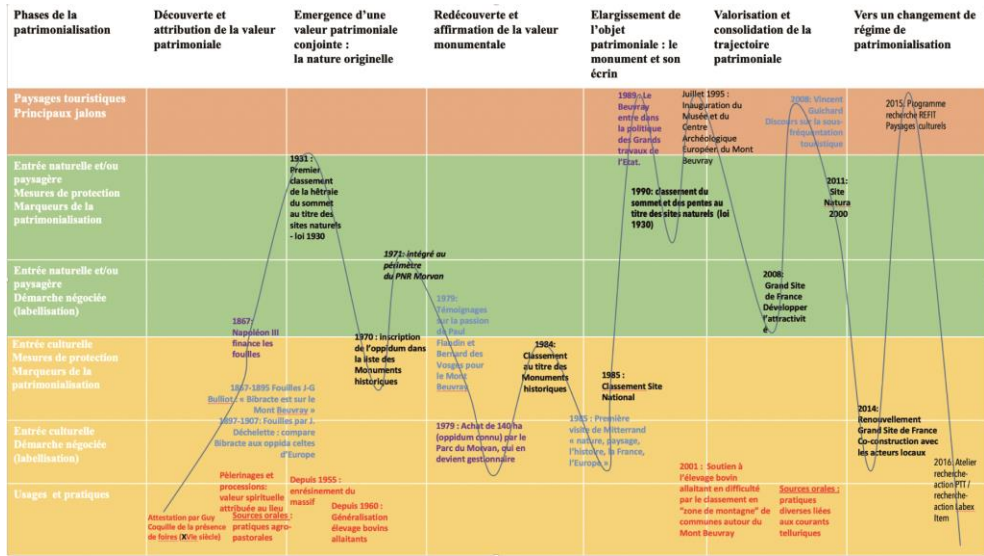


Fig. 7. Timeline of the valorisation of the Mont Beuvray.
Fig. 7. Cronología de la valorización del Mont Beuvray.

In the case of Montnvers, the trajectory of value construction shows that in the beginning, the site was a non-inhabited and non-inhabitable place. As we can see in the Fig.8, the first explorations of the glacier being communicated widely date back to 1741, when two Englishmen came to visit it. The diffusion of their story open then the way to an important touristic development. Starting from 1820, a path is traced which gives access to the glacier, and also to the Hôtel of Montnvers built in 1840¹⁰. Guides and muleteers taking visitors to Montnvers occupy at this time a prominent role in the economic activity of Chamonix. Things accelerate starting from 1909, with the construction of the cog railway of Montnvers, which largely increase touristic attendance, by sensibly enlarging its accessibility. Today, the Montnvers is the second most visited site of the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region, after the not far away *Aiguille du Midi* (data from Savoie Mont Blanc

¹⁰ This is a key time for the development of modern nature-based tourism: the first natural integral reserves are created in France and Europe and the *Club Alpin Français* is created (Selmi 2007). The first national park is created in Yellowstone (Idaho/Montana/Wyoming) the 1st March 1872. By the way, French natural regional parks are instituted the 1st March 1969. Curious coincidence.

Tourism). This space of copresence includes some alpinism practices, but it is mostly visited by contemplative tourists, which positions it within the category of nature-based tourism (Valentine 1992).

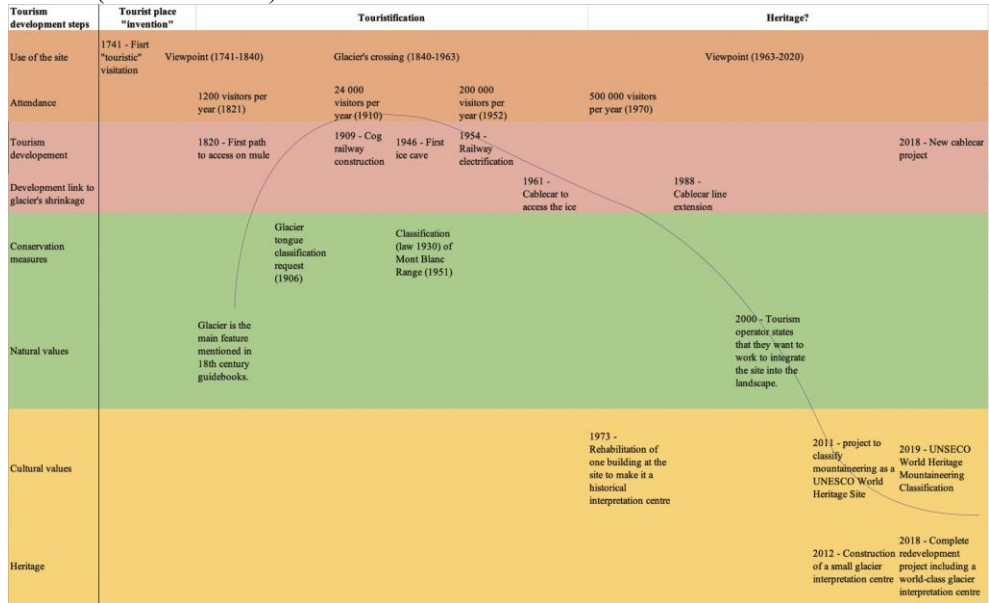


Fig. 8. Timeline of the valorisation of the Monteverver.
Fig. 8. Cronología de la valorización del Monteverver.

Despite the diversity of dates, outstanding events and uses, the trajectories of these two sites share a similar movement through time, which brings them “to adapt” to a changing environment. In one case, the movement goes from an ancient use of the site to a recent one (form inhabiting to touristic valorisation), while in the other, it goes from a long non-use to a recent usage (from the non-inhabited glacier to the touristic valorisation). Moreover, both sites’ trajectories witness the emergence of the problematic of tourism sustainability *at a certain point* in history, in the early 1990s, among managers’ preoccupations. Seen in a long-term perspective, in both cases sustainable development appears as one element (among others) characterising the way through which contemporary groups in the French society name and inhabit space thus turning it into “their” place and organise their surrounding environment. In other words, sustainable tourism is today one of the elements playing a role in the construction of these “localities”, which implies the existence of supports (and activities) of promotion of these places as touristic destinations, or more generally speaking, visit destinations.

2.2 Landscape “my love”: promises of “nature” and “culture” as represented in the promotional material of the two examined touristic sites.

Have a look at Fig. 9 and 10, which are driven from promotional materials about the two sites. A particular visual setting is offered in each case, but landscape is put forward in both cases.



Fig. 9. Monteverns Summer 2019 Tourist Brochure
Fig. 9. Folleto turístico del Monteverns para el verano de 2019.



Fig. 10. Cover image of the guide to the visit of the Grand Site of Bibracte-Mont Beuvray, published in collaboration with the Réseau des Grands Sites de France/
Fig. 10. Imagen de la portada de la guía de visita del Gran Sitio de Bibracte-Mont Beuvray, publicada en colaboración con la Réseau des Grands Sites de France.

In fact, the landscape is increasingly used as a tool for territorial development, namely in “high rural areas”¹¹, where it is associated with a plurality of values, usages and perceptions on behalf of local inhabitants, as well as of different stakeholders in the process of landscape management at different levels, such as farmers, foresters, site managers, etc. (Tully *et al.* 2019). But the example of Monteverns (among many others) shows that the landscape also helps communicating about and promoting non inhabited high mountain glacial sites. A recent study realised on the case of Monteverns, has shown that “multiple spatial-temporal dynamics [...] exist around the issue of glacial landscapes evolution” (Pachoud 2016). The same consideration can be made about the Morvan forest and bocage

¹¹ We use this expression to designate human milieus which are relatively populated and transformed by the human beings, despite being mountainous (high, steep and endowed with a “certain” character). Sometimes, these so called “middle” mountain places can be quite highly populated, see the Bauges, the Cévennes, the Ardèche, the Vercors or the Luberon massifs. But they can also sometimes be very lowly populated, which is the case in the Morvan region, and namely in the Mont Beuvray region we are concerned with here. Concerning the institutionalisation of landscape (patrimonialisation and/or politicisation) in different european contexts, see : Sol, 2007; Papa, 2012; Cauquelin, 2013; Bénos & Milian, 2013; Regnaud *et al.*, 2014.

landscape. Moreover, in the Mont Beuvray region landscape is used as a lever to implicating the inhabitants in the management of “their” territory, which is also the Grand Site’s territory (Darroux *et al.*, 2017). Here we could stop and ask : what exactly is “the landscape” for operators? This question recurs through the meetings, reunions and other exchange arenas more or less directly organised by the Bibracte site’s manager, that we had the chance to observe; it is also a central question for many landscape specialists belonging to different academic disciplines, who are concerned with the “nature of landscape” (what landscape is) on one hand and with “landscape cultures” on the other (Roger 2017; Hirsch and O’Hanlon 1995).

Landscape representations are mobilized in both cases in order to entice more or less ephemeral possible visitors. The visual offer is completely different, as you can see by comparing Fig. 9 and 10. The managers of the two sites exploit different supports for their promotion (paper, digital, audio-visual, etc.) and they lean on different networks (of intermediary organisations such as tourism offices, but also of more or less local socio-economic partners) in order to communicate about and promote “their” landscape.

3. Discussion: To enrich for survival or to survive for enrichment ? Different actors and economic logics into question

The site of Bibracte is managed by what we call in French an *Etablissement public de coopération culturelle (Epsc)*, a public establishment for cultural cooperation. While the Monteverdi is managed by the *Compagnie du Mont Blanc*, a private company (of the “*Société Anonyme*” kind, or SA). Both these public and private companies hold a delegation of public services allowing for the exploitation of the related public estates. What do managers, directors and technicians hired by the managing companies and thus directly engaged in the development and implementation of sustainable tourism, think about it?

On the Bibracte’s side, different positionings stem from the interviews. Confronting massive depopulation and the consequent progress of forests and wastelands in the area (from 1960 on), as well as the progressive reducing of public financial support to the cultural sector (among other neoliberal management strategies adopted at the national and supra-national level), the General Director (GD; but also many elected representatives, namely mayors but also departmental and regional ones) maintains that “we need to sell Bibracte in order to survive”. But doesn’t literally mean what he claims, as we can realise by looking at his acts. Under his guidance, the site has obtained in 2007 (and then renewed in 2013) the *Grand Site de France* (GSF) label. Placed under the double supervision of the Minister in charge of the cultural affairs and the Minister in charge of the environment, this label “*grants that the site is preserved, managed and promoted following the principles of sustainable development*” and “*it namely proves that the manager preserves cultural and natural features of the site as well as its landscape; provides its maintenance and its everyday management; ensures the welcoming of visitors respectful of the site’s patrimonial qualities; integrates local economic development in the site project; watches over touristic frequentation to remain compatible with the patrimonial character of the site and with the inhabitants life conditions; and actually collaborates with the partners of the site on a share project basis.*” (see *Règlement d’usage du label Grand site de France* available on

the internet). But the ancient GD (as well as several employees of the *Epcc*) rather thinks that: “sustainable or not, tourism is not at all the object of Bibracte. Bibracte is a European research centre”, it is above all an experimental place of production of archaeological knowledge”. Many others, such as the person in charge of the archaeological Museum and of the infographic unit of Bibracte (and many inhabitants of this region alike) show themselves extremely careful toward the touristic promotion of “their” territory: “To sell the site ? Ok, but just a little bit. It must not become *mass tourism*”. Mass tourism is perceived as a potential threaten to one of the most attracting characteristics of this place, according to many of its inhabitants : its peace and quietness (what is refer to PhD thesis as a “connected remoteness”) alongside with its low degree of artificialisation¹². Local representatives of the Mont Beuvray region are proud of Bibracte, its presence constituting a reference when it comes to deal with local territorial and environmental management issues. With an annual budget amounting to around 3 millions of euros, Bibracte *Epcc* represents an economic and political power at the level of the surrounding high “hyper-rural” communes’ (Depraz 2017b), which count no more than some hundred inhabitants, sometimes no more than some dozens (such as Glux-en-Glenne, where the *Epcc* has its headquarter, the European archaeological research Centre).

So we can notice that within the *Epcc*, there exist a plurality of opinions concerning the GSF label and the vision of sustainability it fosters, including sustainable tourism. In fact, the *Epcc* is far away from being a monolithic entity, and it rather resembles to a constellation of interprets, who permanently negotiate through discourse and practice their position within the organisation, seen as an overarching whole. The touristic development being one of the strategic orientations of this whole (Parra 2010a). But these different opinions et positions converge into a common intention, shared both within and beyond the enterprise’s frontiers: keep the site alive, work for it to keep on existing (and for them to keep on working), alongside with the surrounding territory. This intention stems from a shared consciousness about the site and its surrounding environment being intimately connected, and that this link is – among others - the ultimate foundation of the “singularity” of the ensemble (Berque 2016). The model of “integrated management”, replacing “the site within its landscape” and, thus, with the surrounding environmental and human milieu, proceeds from this consciousness (Moore, Guichard, and Sanchis 2020).

On the Montenvers side, confronting the glacier retreat, managers mention a reversal of the “resource” from the glacier in itself to another of a new more “patrimonial” kind (Gumuchian, Pecqueur, and Collectif 2007; Senil and Landel 2016). For the Marketing Director of the site, “*our need today is to say: ‘well, you are the living witnesses of what’s happening today in terms of climatic change, environmental footprint, etc.’*”. On such basis, managers work to “*re-set*” the site in order to move the focus from the diminishing resource (the glacier), and to project it on the historical and patrimonial perspectives. This standing point is shared by the municipality, whose local representatives think that “[the *Mer the Glace*] *no longer has the interest that it represents, the magic which it represents*

¹² These elements of discourse are driven from Piai’s fieldwork, and more precisely: from several informal conversations with the current GD of Bibracte, completed by field observations as recorded in her field notes; from a recorded interview with the ancient GD (JPG, 10/02/2017, *Centre de recherche archéologique européen de Glux-en-Glenne* - 58) ; a recorded interview with the person in charge of the Museum (EV, 10/03/2017, *Centre de recherche archéologique européen de Glux-en-Glenne* - 58).

over there. And so, well, we need to acknowledge it. So we need to give sense again to the life of Montenvers and give again an added value through the interpretation and the understanding of the phenomenon [the retreat of the glacier]”. The sustainable character of these new projects is also related to the fact that managers don’t want to be perceived as “exploiting a piece of mountain [...] straight to, straight to the end, just only to make money and that’s it”. This last assessment takes them to talk about “infrastructure integration”, “sustainability” and has led to the creation of an “Environmental Observatory”. In the case of Montenvers, managers seem to be willing to sustainably pursue the economic activity, on one hand by substituting the “classical” resource of the glacier with other resources which are less in peril and danger, such as the history of the site or the landscape; but also to use the disappearing of the glacier as a new resource possibly leading to the emergence of the *Last Chance Tourism* phenomenon (Salim and Ravel 2020).

Following a “particular setting” in each one case examined (Olivier de Sardan, 1995), sustainable tourism appears to be in tension between two different economic logics: “survival” and “business as usual”. The *Epcc* Bibracte uses the sustainable tourism strategy in a self-financing perspective, within the framework of a larger project of integrated and participative management of the site. Whereas the *Compagnie du Mont Blanc* uses sustainable tourism within the framework of a large-scale re-developemnt project. But “*not only*”: the enrichment of visitors’ experience through the visit of the site (which the axiom founding “cultural tourism”) is increasingly a prerequisite for monetary enrichment. It is worth noting that in both cases, the narrative of survival and the narrative of enrichment are both present. In the case of Mont Beuvray, the problem formulated is one of having “enough money” to keep on leading the same activities as usual in a changing context marked by usual financial support shortenings. In the case of Montenvers, the problem stated is to avoid “making money” to be the only reason for the enterprise to exist: the touristic promotion of the site must equally serve the “cultural” purpose of increase public awareness to the urgent issue of the glaciers’ survival at our climate changing time (Beerens-Bettex, 2017; Mistral *et al.*, 2015).

In both cases, survival and enrichment appear to be two important categories regulating the economic lives of the examined organisations. On the enrichment side, this acknowledgment is consistent with a recent socio-economic thesis claiming that our is an “enrichment” one, meaning that the socio-cultural category of “the enrichment” (and, more in general, “the economy”) occupies an unprecedented role in our society. According to the examples discussed here, many entities such as “culture”, “nature” and “inhabiting” appear to be henceforth submitted to this imperative. Whereas the “survival” logic relates back to the more general problematic of “local resilience” (for instance in the language employed by the UNESCO), and thus to the question of how the “peoples” make resources (namely patrimonial) out of their environment and thus face contemporary change today.

Conclusions

According to a first analysis we can say that the answer to our initial question: Are great touristic sites vectors of sustainability? Is yes, this constituting a common aspect between the two of them. Nevertheless, the cross analysis of our case studies shows that all the

identified common aspects are grounded into very singular configurations in both cases. In synthesis, we have on one side a patrimonial labelled Great Site incorporating the environmental dimension and on the other side a great nature-based touristic site which invents and put forward a cultural (say patrimonial) dimension. The integration of these dimensions (natural/environmental and cultural/patrimonial) in the sites' management confers to them – as well as to their managers – an “exemplary” character (Micoud, 1991). Between the lines, a supplementary common aspect appears, which is the existence of a third “social logic” (Kilani, 2012), that of “exemplarity”, as part of the global economy of these organisations.

In conclusion, tracking sustainable tourism on our two research fields compared brought us to open up an interesting perspective, of studying exemplarity as a strategic tool to foster enrichment and resilience in mountain areas at present times.

Bibliography

- Abélès, Marc. 2008. *Anthropologie de la globalisation*. First Edition. Paris: Payot.
- Agier, Michel. 2013. “Le tournant contemporain de l’anthropologie. Comprendre, encore, le monde qui nous entoure.” *Socio. La nouvelle revue des sciences sociales*, no. 1: 77–93. <https://doi.org/10.4000/socio.217>.
- Baudrillard, Jean, and J.-P. Mayer. 1996. *La société de consommation*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Beerens-Bettex, Simon. 2017. “Le droit de la montagne face au changement climatique.” *Revue juridique de l’environnement* me 42 (HS03): 187–200.
- Bénos, Rémi, and Johan Milian. 2013. “Conservation, valorisation, labellisation: la mise en patrimoine des hauts-lieux pyrénéens et les recompositions de l’action territoriale.” *Vertigo - la revue électronique en sciences de l’environnement*, no. Hors-série 16. <https://doi.org/10.4000/vertigo.13631>.
- Berque, Augustin. 2016. *Ecoumène: Introduction à l’étude des milieux humains*. Paris: Belin.
- Boltanski, Luc, and Arnaud Esquerre. 2017. *Enrichissement: Une critique de la marchandise*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Bourdeau, Philippe. 2011. “Rendez-vous dans l’après-tourisme ?” In *Le tourisme : émancipation ou contrôle social ?*, edited by Rodolphe Christin and Philippe Bourdeau, 209–57. Bellecombe-en-Bauges: EDITIONS DU CROQUANT.
- Cauquelin, Anne. 2013. *Le site et le paysage*. 3e édition. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France - PUF.
- Christin, Rodolphe. 2014. *L’Usure du monde: Critique de la déraison touristique*. 1st ed. Montreuil: L’Échappée.
- . 2018. *Manuel de l’antitourisme*. Édition revue et augmentée. ECOSOCIETE.
- Dardot, Pierre, and Christian Laval. 2010. *La nouvelle raison du monde. Essai sur la société néolibérale*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Darroux, Caroline, Vincent Guichard, Olivier Thiébault, and Claude Janin. 2017. “La recherche-action participative dans le Grand Site de France de Bibracte – Mont Beuvray, un laboratoire de la fabrique territoriale par la médiation du paysage dans le parc naturel régional du Morvan,” January. <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-01461999>.
- Debord, Guy. 2018. *La Société du Spectacle*. Paris: Folio.
- Depraz, Samuel. 2017b. “Penser les marges en France: l’exemple des territoires de «l’hyper-ruralité».” *Bulletin de l’association de géographes français. Géographies* 94 (94–3): 385–99. <https://doi.org/10.4000/bagf.2086>.

- Fischer, M., M. Huss, C. Barboux, and M. Hoelzle. 2014. "The New Swiss Glacier Inventory SGI2010: Relevance of Using High-Resolution Source Data in Areas Dominated by Very Small Glaciers." *Arctic, Antarctic and Alpine Research*, no. 46: 933–45.
- Graeber, D. 2001. *Toward An Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams*. 2001 edition. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Graeber, David. 2013. "It Is Value That Brings Universes into Being." *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 3 (2): 219–43.
- Gumuchian, Hervé, Bernard Pecqueur, and Collectif. 2007. *La ressource territoriale*. Paris: Economica.
- Hirsch, Eric, and Michael O'Hanlon, eds. 1995. *The Anthropology of Landscape: Perspectives on Place and Space*. 1 edition. Oxford : New York: Clarendon Press.
- Kilani, Mondher. 2012. *Anthropologie - 2ed. - Du local au global*. 2e édition revue et augmentée. Paris (21, rue du Montparnasse 75283): Armand Colin.
- Long, Norman. 1977. *Introduction to the Sociology of Rural Development*. London: Law Book Co of Australasia.
- . 2015. "Activities, Actants and Actors: Theoretical Perspectives on Development Practice and Practitioners." In *Constructing a New Framework for Rural Development*, 22:31–58. *Research in Rural Sociology and Development* 22. Emerald Group Publishing Limited. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S1057-192220150000022002>.
- Maingueneau, Dominique. 2014. *Discours et analyse du discours - Introduction*. Paris: Armand Colin.
- Micoud, André. 1991. *Des hauts-lieux: la construction sociale de l'exemplarité*. Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique.
- Mistral, Jacques, Jean Tirole, Michel Rocard, and Collectif. 2015. *Le climat va-t-il changer le capitalisme ? La grande mutation du XXIe siècle*. 1st ed. Paris: Eyrolles.
- Moore, Tom, Vincent Guichard, and Jesús Álvarez Sanchís. 2020. "The Place of Archaeology in Integrated Cultural Landscape Management." *Journal of European Landscapes* 1(0) (May): 9–28. <https://doi.org/10.5117/JEL.2020.1.47039>.
- Mourey, Jacques, and Ludovic Ravanel. 2017. "Évolution des itinéraires d'accès aux refuges du bassin de la Mer de Glace (massif du Mont Blanc, France)." *Journal of Alpine Research | Revue de géographie alpine*, no. 105–4 (January). <https://doi.org/10.4000/rga.3780>.
- Narotzky, Susana, and Niko Besnier. 2014. "Crisis, Value, and Hope: Rethinking the Economy: An Introduction to Supplement 9." *Current Anthropology* 55 (S9): S4–16. <https://doi.org/10.1086/676327>.
- Olivier de Sardan, Jean-Pierre. 1995. *Anthropologie et Développement : Essai en socio-anthropologie du changement social*. Marseille : Paris: Karthala.
- Pachoud, Marie. 2016. "Evolutions des paysages glaciaires dans les Alpes : perceptions et adaptations touristiques, cas du site Montenvers-Mer de Glace." In . <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01284963>.
- Papa, C. 2012. *Lecture di paesaggi*. Milano: Guerini e Associati.
- Parra, Constanza. 2010a. "La Gouvernance de l'écotourisme Comme Force Socialement Innovante Pour Ouvrir La Voie à Des Perspectives plus Durables : Le Cas Du Parc Naturel Régional Du Morvan." Thèse de Doctorat en Sciences Economiques, Université de Lille 1. <http://www.theses.fr/2010LIL12003/document>.
- Peyrache-Gadeau, Véronique, Karine Basset, Isabelle Arpin, Arnaud Cosson, Caroline Darroux, Mélanie Duval, Chiara PIAI, and Fabien Hoblea. 2016. "Trajectoires de La Distinction Territoriale En Montagne : Vers Un Nouveau Régime d'authenticité Patrimoniale?." In *3ème Congrès Bisannuel de l'Association of Critical Heritage Studies ACHS "What Does Heritage Change?"* Montréal, Canada: Association of Critical Heritage Studies ACHS. <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01442979>.

- Regnauld, Hervé, Isabelle Lefort, and Denis Retailé. 2014. "Paysage et esthétisation des processus spatiaux." *L'Information géographique* Vol. 78 (3): 6–9.
- Roger, Alain. 2017. *Court traité du paysage*. Folio.
- Salim, Emmanuel, Jacques Mourey, Ludovic Ravel, Pietro Picco, and Christophe Gauchon. 2019. "Les guides de haute montagne face aux effets du changement climatique. Quelles perceptions et stratégies d'adaptation au pied du Mont Blanc?" *Journal of Alpine Research | Revue de géographie alpine*, August. <http://journals.openedition.org/rga/5842>.
- Salim, Emmanuel, and Ludovic Ravel. 2020. "Is Climate Change Driving People to the Ice? A Case Study from Montanvers Mer de Glace, French Alps." In . <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-02503442>.
- Selmi, Adel. 2007. *Gouverner la nature*. Edited by Vincent Hirtzel and Laboratoire d'anthropologie sociale. Paris, France: L'Herne, DL 2007.
- Senil, Nicolas, and Pierre-Antoine Landel. 2016. "De la ressource territoriale à la ressource patrimoniale." In *Au cœur des territoires créatifs. Proximités et ressources territoriale*, by Eric Glon and Bernard Pecqueur, 10. Presses universitaires de Rennes.
- Sol, Marie-Pierre. 2007. "La patrimonialisation comme (re)mise en tourisme. De quelques modalités dans les ' Pyrénées catalanes .'" In *Tourisme et patrimoine : Un moment du monde*, by Collectif, edited by Philippe Violier and Olivier Lazzarotti, 161–75. Angers: Presses de l'Université d'Angers.
- Tully, Gemma, Chiara Piai, Jesús Rodríguez-Hernández, and Elodie Delhommeau. 2019. "Understanding Perceptions of Cultural Landscapes in Europe: A Comparative Analysis Using 'Oppida' Landscapes." *The Historic Environment: Policy & Practice* 10 (2): 198–223. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17567505.2019.1587251>.
- Valentine, Peter. 1992. "Review : Nature-Based Tourism." In *Special Interest Tourism*, edited by Betty Weiler and Colin Michael Hall, 105–27. London, Great Britain: Belhaven Press. <https://researchonline.jcu.edu.au/1632/>.