

Rebuilding Trust to Encourage the Resilience of Weakened Territories in France

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Research Main Interests Topics

Information Systems and Cooperative Devices

ICOE: Information (Data) and Communication Organizing Ecosystems. Especially in Healthcare (Interfaces Organizations)

Based on Cooperation and Trust

Strategic, Economic and Territorial Intelligence

Sustainable Development on Territories

Interactions – Situations – Social Innovation

Topics of the presented Paper

Introduction

1 – Weakened Territories in France

2 - Scientific Positioning – Methodology

3 - An Approach Focusing on Three Sectors: Local Companies, Tourism, Healthcare and Social Welfare

4 - A Territorial Intelligence Approach Developing Interactions for Cooperations

5 - Trying to Develop a Contributory Intelligence Around a Synergy of Projects

6 - With a New Role for Public Services: State, Local Authorities and Social Protection organizations

Conclusion

Introduction

The issue of inequalities between territories is an **old problem** in France.

New dimension with the crisis of social ties, in a global context of **globalization** and **digital transformation**.

In an approach to **Territorial Intelligence** centered on **information and communication** stakes, we propose some ways to promote the sustainable development of **weakened territories**, insisting on a dynamic of trust based on shared projects, to (re) make society.

1 – Weakened Territories in France

Territorial inequalities are an **old problem** in France.

J.F Gravier bestseller (1947). Creation of the DATAR in 1963.

The problem of weakened territories suddenly became apparent with the **riots** in the suburbs of large cities at the end of **2005**.

Two years ago with the **Yellow Vests** (*Gilets Jaunes*) revolt, in autumn 2018, principally concerning small towns or rural areas (Guilluy / provincial or “peripheral France”).

A rupture between areas, affected by deindustrialization and unemployment (globalization consequences), compared to areas where urban elites of power and wealth live.

A **crisis of social links** (Paugam) with a strong sense of abandonment or injustice accentuated by the isolation and withdrawal of public services.

This **crisis of society** is also a crisis of **trust**.

Worried about their future, these weakened territories have often a strong **identity**.

2 - Scientific Positioning – Methodology

A **constructivist** perspective (the construction of social reality by all the actors) insisting on issues of meaning, interactions and social representations.

Research Team, **DICEN IdF** (Information and Communication Devices in the Digital Era).

French Interdisciplinary **Information and Communication** Sciences: both information (data production and uses) / communication (links, interactions) perspectives.

ICOE Approach: Information and Communication Organizing Ecosystems (companies, organizations, social groups, territories).

An **Action Research** position (producing knowledge for action) ie **participant observation** with field observations and interviews with the main actors.

Importance of the **researcher's commitment** (Bernard) and communication to understand **change** (Carayol).

Creativity and **innovation** in territories (Godet).



Importance of **project dynamics** to build trust between all the actors.


To produce a **collective intelligence** (Zara) and to learn how to better work together.

The **trust dimension** is essential, both in the people and in the tools used.

Fundamental notion of **resilience**. Originally in Physical Sciences, then in Psychology to explain how an individual could react to hard difficulties. Then a collective dimension for social groups, organizations and territories.

Adaptation of Situational and Interactionist Semiotics (Mucchielli) to understand the meaning for actors in a specific **situation** divided in different "frames": intentions and stakes, culture and reference, compared positions, quality of relationships, historical, temporal and emotions frame, etc. in a **systemic** approach with **interactions** (between human and non human actors) building a system in constant evolution (dynamic)

Communication may help to (re)create territories through cooperative shared **projects**: territories as **shared cooperative spaces** .



Data and its transformation into **knowledge** is also essential, with the issues of **Big** (by relying on the voluntary sector – *secteur associatif*) and **Open data** (institutional data) with **GDPR** (*General Data Protection Regulation*) challenges.

Evolution of jobs: new profession of **Data scientist**, applied to sustainable development and territorial marketing. Giving **meaning** to the data / mediation between humans and data through interface tools (Nesvijevskaia – Chartron).

Importance of digital socio-technical devices, web sites and social networks as levers of resilience and their **ambivalence** (Ellul). They cannot do everything, but can help possible useful changes.

Focus on **visibility** issues (especially on social networks) to promote **attractiveness** (e-reputation and territorial marketing issues).

Importance of **watching** activities (benchmarking success stories)

3 - An Approach Focusing on Three Sectors: Local Companies, Tourism, Healthcare and Social Welfare

Three Sectors of Analysis

Three complementary converging sectors of analysis.

First of all, for the sustainable economic development of these territories, through **local companies**, betting on authenticity and home-grown products (gastronomy), or on technological or specific product niches, employing local labor, with an innovative and creative dimension.

Role of the National Gendarmerie (*Gendarmerie Nationale*) in protecting both their physical (buildings) and their intangible (knowledge) assets.

Tourism based on culture heritage and nature resources as a lever of resilience.

Prospects of "**slow tourism**", focusing on authenticity, valuing cultural heritage, in interaction with nature and gastronomy.



Social networks can be a lever, as for "geocaching".

Development of different "routes": long-distance hiking trails (GR), the different Compostela ways, the paths of the Cathars (heretic people in the south of France during the Middle Ages) Stevenson's or Jacques Coeur's "routes" etc.

Healthcare and Social Welfare issues (as **Education**) are essential to maintain populations and attract newcomers (social link). We study them in a more global perspective of social and territorial inequalities.

Innovative approaches as **Interface Organizations** (Health Networks or Multi-Professional Healthcare houses, etc.), with support **platforms** (PTA) with the development of new "Territorial Health Professional **Communities**" (CPTS) with local **telemedicine** projects and socio-technical devices.

The first step is **preserving** existing public services (more networked around services platforms) and also maintain or develop infrastructures (digital, roads, trains, coaches, etc.) to limit the isolation of the poorest and most vulnerable people.

The Case of the Couserans area (Ariège / Pyrenees)

Couserans = district of Saint-Girons (Ariège Department / French Pyrenees – Occitanie Region). Strong **identity**: "an island in the Pyrenees" (*La Croix*).

A strong **dissent** tradition = importance of Yellow Vests movement.

Heavily affected by the **rural exodus**: 95,000 inhabitants in 1850 and 29,000 in 2015. Its "capital", the small town (sub-prefecture) of Saint-Girons (6300 inhabitants) has lost most of its industries (paper mills) since 1975.

End of its passenger **railway** connection to Toulouse as soon as 1969 and its hospital threatened to close for several years. Classes and schools are closing in many villages.

Main problem of isolated and heavily depopulated mountain valleys.

Natural resources (mountains, rivers, etc.) and cultural patrimony (romanesque churches, local museums) may be a lever for a new sustainable development through **slow tourism**.

COUSERANS: the Pyrenees and St Lizier cathedral



Live shows (*spectacles vivants*) as *Autrefois le Couserans* (30.000 spectators / 800 participants) or the *Consonani* keep the nostalgia of an **idealized past** and the pride of local traditions alive. Essential assets of the **voluntary sector** (*associations*).

Local companies successes, particularly in the food sector (pork products, cheese dairies, cakes, jams, ice creams, etc.), and also some competitive companies with niches in industrial fields.

Interface organizations in the **healthcare** sector: Echo Healthcare Network, Home Hospitalization, MAIA for Alzheimer's patients, are now integrated into a CPTS (Territorial Professional Health Community) with the Local Hospital.

Some (6) Multi Professional Healthcare Home (MSP) and one under construction in Saint-Girons.

Training and **education** are also important assets. Three high schools or *lycées* (one general and two vocational) in Saint-Girons.

Creation of the new **Community of Communes** (94) of Couserans – Pyrénées in 2017. A major and federating actor for any territorial intelligence project.

Nevertheless only an hour and a half away from Toulouse and its TGV station or airport.

Important asset of **quality of life** and a rather preserved nature.

4 – A Territorial Intelligence Approach

Developing Interactions For Cooperations

The Importance of Territorial Intelligence ...

We first refer to Le Moënne: "Territorial intelligence is a form of **collective intelligence** developed on and around a territory in order to think and act there". For Zara, collective intelligence is "the intelligence of the **link**, of the relation".

With the importance of "**engaging communication**" (Bernard) with the convergence of four challenges: creating links (interactions), meaning, knowledge and action. With the idea of "strategic **knowledge communities**" (Fayard and Moinet).

For Bertacchini, Territorial Intelligence must "promote a culture of participation and **project** to federate all skills".

To (Re) build Trust ...

Girardot and Masselot (INTI Network) proposed the **Catalyze** method to make emerge and federate the initiatives of the actors of the territories, in particular of the **inhabitants**, with the use of the existing data and the production of new ones, with the possibility of creating territorial observatories.

Articulation with the **FAcT - Mirror** approach (Fears-Attractions-Temptations in Mirror Method), proposed by G. Le Cardinal to develop trust around complex projects, but also in weakened territories such as in Belarus area affected by the Chernobyl disaster (2006), based on a relationship ethic, focusing on respect, loyalty and mutual commitment.

... **With Communication (relationship) and New Uses of Data as Levers**

Communication (relationships and co-operations) and new uses of data may constitute important levers of sustainable development of territories.

“**Living Labs**” have been developed in this perspective. They insist on the project dimension, such as Brie Nov (Seine-et-Marne North), which proposes a **PPPP** approach (public-private partnerships and population), particularly to help to work together native inhabitants and newcomers, a main challenge in Couserans.

We outline the human interactions with the risks of data use drift ("datacracy" for Stiegler), we prefer his "**contributory learning territory**" approach. Insisting on the changes induced by massive data in human activities.

Uses of data and digital devices are not a miracle solution, but they can be an important lever for "**resilience**" and territorial development by promoting "**reliance**" to produce data for action, in particular to promote collaborative innovations.

5 - Trying to Develop a Contributory Intelligence Around a Synergy of Projects

Importance of the Appropriation of the Territory through Shared Spaces for Discussions about Experiences and Projects

In a socio-constructivist approach, territory can be (re)constructed through a synergy of projects based on the sharing of knowledge.

To foster a form of "resilience" of these territories, based on their assets of authenticity and identity around a new collective project of territorial dynamics, involving as many local and external actors as possible.

We propose to bet on "**reliance**" (network interactions) **for** "**resilience**", by making this territory more visible in the era of social networks and globalization and more attractive to **newcomers**: people and companies.

Which Devices for Which Projects?

The Couserans Pyrenees Community of Communes or **Com-Com** and the **Regional Natural Park** of the Ariège Pyrenees including the Couserans and the various tourist offices may constitute interesting entry points.

The **Web** can also be an important element in making territories visible and contributing to their resilience. The University of Teramo, in Abruzzo (Italy), is thus trying to boost a new dynamic for the L'Aquila area, victim of an earthquake a few years ago.

A Smart or rather Wise Territory ?

"**Rural coworking**" combining aspects of a break from the hectic life and remote work, is proposed for example by Mutinerie Village in the Perche (West France), with, the question of relays as levers for development (an entry point in Paris). Role of the **attractiveness agencies** and the repositioning of the Couserans **tourist offices**, which, like the communities of communes a few years ago, are in the process of being grouped together.

The Impact of the Covid Pandemic Crisis

The Covid pandemic crisis pushed the inhabitants of large cities to take a different look at these economically vulnerable territories, from which they often come and where they quite often have second homes.


Their quality of life can be coupled with **distance working** (teleworking) for new attractiveness in our services society, with the added advantage of renewed contact with nature and the rather low price of housing.

A major prerequisite: **breaking the isolation** of the Couserans. Isolation on two levels: transport and also digital. The development of broadband, including in remote valleys, is essential to promote activities with a strong intangible dimension.

6 - With a New Role for Public Services: State, Local Authorities and Social Protection organizations

According to Algan, the Yellow Vests revolt correspond to “**wounded relationships** with others”, both at the individual and collective level. Always with reference to Algan, it is a question of “creating **links and trust** in the territories”: this idea of rebuilding trust which is the guiding thread of our work.

The official discourse insists on promoting new forms of public action in territories, especially in vulnerable ones. A new National Agency for Territorial Cohesion (**ANCT**) was created in November 2019, bringing together former organizations, including the DATAR. Is it a new and interesting way to position the national **State** as a **services platform** and **project engineering**, particularly with digital services (e-administration)? Is it simply a change of name? Only time will tell us...



The law about “**Digital Republic**” (2016) insists on the role of “open data”, in the municipality over 3500 inhabitants. It is an hard challenge but also an important opportunity.

Data is essential in healthcare and social protection, to rethink the Welfare State, but in a difficult context (mistrust, budgetary constraints, etc.), especially in vulnerable territories, so long forgotten. **Ambivalence**: the digital transformation can help, as it can also aggravate the social disruption of “medical deserts”, by continuing to maintain them as “**digital deserts**”. The question of **infrastructures** to fight against isolation is fundamental at two levels: transport and digital.

Like progress or technology (Ellul), data can be ambivalent: they can help rebuild social ties and improve or enable new services for inhabitants, but they can also derive into “**datacracy**” (Stiegler).

Like all our society, weakened territories are at a **crossroads** ...


Conclusion

A work in progress. We propose **some ways** to an approach of **Territorial Intelligence** in interaction with the inhabitants to develop a **collective intelligence** around a synergy of **projects** to build a **shared future** and give hope to these weakened territories.

Challenge of renewal of **public services** with new forms of presence and action in territories to be invented, federating and creating new links to develop the **resilience's capacity** of these weakened territories by associating all the actors.

First making these territories more **visible** on social networks (websites of local authorities, such as local companies) and promoting their e-reputation in a territorial marketing approach.

To develop a **value chain process of attractiveness** by having all the actors working together to build a shared future with trust as a key lever.



With all the complexity of social representations through the **three levels of trust** (Le Cardinal): in oneself, in others (humans and tools) and in the future.

Converging in a constructivist approach of information – communication to try to build **hope** through a project dynamics for a **shared future** built on cooperations and knowledge.



**Thank you very much
for your Attention !**

Questions ?

Abstract

In an international context of globalization and digital transformation, social ties are in crisis, particularly in France. In an approach to Territorial Intelligence concerning information and communication stakes, we propose some ways to try to (re)build trust to promote resilience and sustainable development of weakened territories in France. This rebuilding of trust can be achieved through projects to develop a collective representation for shared understanding in communities of knowledge, associating all the actors and with a new role in public services. We will put forward an application of this approach in three sectors of activity: cultural tourism, local businesses, healthcare and social protection. We will consider the application of this approach to a specific territory (the 'Couserans'), in the heart of the French Pyrenees, whose specificities and opportunities of resilience we will present.