Intangible Cultural Heritage Exposed to Public Deliberation: A Participatory Experience in a Regional Nature Park

Noël Barbe, Marina Chauliac and Jean-Louis Tornatore

MARIE DEER

DOI: 10.4000/books.gup.227
Publisher: Göttingen University Press
Place of publication: Göttingen University Press
Year of publication: 2015
Published on OpenEdition Books: 12 April 2017
Serie: Göttingen Studies in Cultural Property
Electronic ISBN: 9782821875494

http://books.openedition.org/gup/227

Electronic reference
Intangible Cultural Heritage Exposed to Public Deliberation: A Participatory Experience in a Regional Nature Park

Noël Barbe, Marina Chauliac, Jean-Louis Tornatore

1 A political Reading

In 2007, when the Ballons des Vosges Regional Nature Park (Parc naturel régional des Ballons des Vosges, PNRBV) wanted to implement a policy of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) for its entire territory and to register that as an objective in its charter, which was at that time being revised, one of us, a member of the park’s sci-
stific advisory board and a lecturer in socio-anthropology at the University of Lorraine, suggested a political reading: A reading that saw a radical new direction for the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (hereafter: the Convention) centered on practices and inviting practitioners and their reference “community” to participate in the process of nominating and assigning heritage value. This reading led to a reversal of perspective: instead of offering itself up to scientific expertise, in the form of an inventory prepared by an ethnologist, as the PNRBV had originally imagined, the idea was instead to start out with an understanding of the park’s unique cultural aspects and to deliberately raise the park’s profile by promoting those aspects under the guise of the concept of ICH.

And yet it was not obvious how the project should proceed, even taking as its starting point the Convention and its definition of heritage in Article 2: “The ‘intangible cultural heritage’ means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage.” (UNESCO 2003). Furthermore in Article 15: “Within the framework of its safeguarding activities of the intangible cultural heritage, each State Party shall endeavor to ensure the widest possible participation of communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals that create, maintain and transmit such heritage, and to involve them actively in its management.” (UNESCO 2003). And although the participation of the population is mentioned here and was also later confirmed by the intergovernmental committee in its Operational Directives, which insisted on the population’s “free, prior, and informed consent,” the states parties were and are given a great deal of latitude in interpreting this: in short, they are invited to negotiate their “take” on the Convention according to their own tradition of directives for heritage objects (Tornatore 2011). In fact, this idea of the “take” is very appropriate as a way to account for the effects of this tension, which is built into the very text of the Convention. If we think of the Convention as being the object of “state takes,” that allows us, on the one hand, to focus on the history of public action in the management of the past and, as a result, to emphasize continuity, in that a tradition of expertise and of an establishment of heritage “entities” will necessarily influence the interpretation of the means used to identify the “entities” intended by the Convention. Thus, in the French tradition, cultural entities have been filtered through two institutions, or institutional configurations: the first of these is folklore, whose development from the 19th century to the Second World War is bound up with the methodology of

---

6 See Tornatore 2011 for a presentation of the analytical framework of this reading.
8 This idea of the “take” is borrowed from Christian Bessy and Francis Chateauraynaud (1995), who apply it to the relationship of authentification or falsification towards any object which is appraised.
the inventory and of cartographic representation; the more recent institution, which is a specifically French invention, is ethnological heritage. Its distinctive feature is that it combines – or rather attempts to combine, since it has not succeeded in establishing itself – the scientific discipline of ethnology with the politics of acknowledging culture, in its anthropological sense, as heritage (Barbe 2013; Tornatore 2004, 2010). And yet, on the other hand, the “take” engages and defines the one who is doing the taking; if it is an informed take, it also informs; and we could even claim that the taker does not escape unmarked from the taking. Thus, we could go so far as to imagine an evolution of the state’s heritage institutions, under the influence of the Convention and of the new category which it establishes, in which those institutions have the potential to shape, possibly even to transform, the very ideas and traditions on which they are based, namely the ideas and traditions of heritage as they relate to monuments and to objects. In fact, the resistances that these institutions are working against are very telling on this point. It has been proposed that the idea of a “living heritage,” which the Convention promotes, is a contradiction in terms. This paradoxical definition of heritage is an apt expression of the tension that the Convention establishes between the state and individual communities. This gives rise to a crucial question: What kind of negotiation is possible between these two levels, such that the relation does not become one of pure imposition nor of pure crystallization? The offices and individuals charged with applying the Convention, or confronted with that application, have not failed to ask themselves that question.

The fact that the project was both local – in that it covered the territory of a nature park – and ahead of its time – in that France had only just ratified the Convention, in 2006, which itself had only just come into force – meant that conditions were favorable for experimentation based on this constitutive paradox. What happened was that the proposal was made for the municipalities to “bend” the Convention by redistributing expertise, in other words to take the idea of participation literally and to make it the basis of the designation. That led to an invitation to consider a system in which the scientist is less a content specialist, with the kind of jurisdiction over an object that an ethnologist usually has, than a guide, essentially a practitioner of social research, who therefore has no (cultural) object to defend; this system, then, had to make it its aim to define both people and things at the same time (expert practitioners as well as their objects). In other words, the work of categorization is refined as a part of the interaction performed by the system itself. And this aim certainly resonated with the fundamental and ongoing desire of the regional nature parks to “put the resident at the heart of their action”; in fact, it could be said to be inscribed into these parks’ “institutional nature” to the extent that a regional nature park is, by definition, at a certain level and in some sense, a

---

9 The Mission du patrimoine ethnologique was established within the Ministry of Culture from 1980 to 2010.

10 As Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2006: 168) notes, “if it is truly vital, it does not need safeguarding; if it is almost dead, safeguarding will not help.”
“participatory” structure in its institutional setup, because its existence is based on municipalities’ voluntary signing on to a project defined in the charter. In addition, the fact that participation, as a means and as a goal, was about to be inscribed into the park’s new charter meant, that this aim was also positively received by the PNRBV team. But it also proceeded from a reflection on the modalities of engaged research arising from local experience in the politics of ethnological heritage and on how some of the ethnological advisers within the decentralized services of the Ministry of Culture, namely the Regional Offices for Cultural Affairs (directions régionales des affaires culturelles, DRAC), had interpreted their missions and allowed them to evolve by bucking the dominant practice of documentary expertise and promoting the idea of participatory expertise or, at the very least, a sharing of cultural and heritage expertise. This led to the involvement, starting at the end of 2007, of the DRACs of Franche-Comté and of Lorraine, via their ethnology advisers, not only with financial support for the project from their institution but also, and above all, with intellectual and scientific support for the operation.

2 The “Publics” of the Process

Following the initial inventory project – during which an intern was assigned to catalogue the items that were likely to fall under the new heritage category, as well as to identify the stakeholders – and a “transitional” phase, a consensus was reached in early 2008 on the use of the citizens’ jury system. The park’s team decided that it was unrealistic to experiment with such a system over the entire territory of the park (208 municipalities), given the available resources, and to set up two experimental zones instead. The two experimental zones were in Lorraine and in Franche-Comté – in Lorraine, the Pays de la Déodatie (29 municipalities around Saint-Dié-des-Vosges); in Franche-Comté, the Pays des Vosges Saônoises (37 municipalities in the northeastern part of Haute-Saône). In each, a citizens’ jury was to be set up with the task of identifying an “element” of ICH for which the park would then undertake to acquire recognition. Although its use for ICH is new, there is no lack of examples and models for participatory and deliberative democracy, which emerged as a theoretical issue in the nineteen-sixties and seventies and then became more powerful in the nineteen-eighties, with practical developments (Politix 2002; Bacqué et al. 2005; Sintomer 2007, 2008; Blondiaux 2008; Bacqué and Sintomer 2011). Over time, and especially in the last fifteen years or so, in France, participatory systems have multiplied, sometimes even codified into law.

11 Jean-Louis Tornatore was an ethnology adviser for the Lorraine Regional Office for Cultural Affairs from 1995 to 2000.
12 See Barbe 2003a, as well as the entire issue of Les nouvelles de l’archéologie (Archaeology News) to which the text is an introduction (Barbe 2003b; Tornatore 2004, 2007). On a particular and very classical object, namely rural architecture, see Barbe 2008.
13 Before being in charge of the Rhône-Alpes region, from 2007 to 2011, Marina Chauliac was the ethnology adviser for Lorraine.
But despite this general context, the ad hoc shape that the system would take was not obvious from the beginning and had to be established bit by bit, through an uncertain and tentative dynamic based on a back-and-forth between a steering committee and what was happening on the ground. The adjustments that were made along the way resulted in a grass-roots refinement of the concept of ICH – is the element in question a practice or a project? Does a part of the project need to be considered in practice? – and dealt with the criteria for the admissibility of practices as well as with the form of participation, leading from proposals to empowerment.

The steering committee enabled and supported the realization of the project from start to finish.\(^\text{14}\) In theory, the committee was relatively large, consisting of elected officials and members of the park staff (the president, the director, the mission leaders), members of its scientific advisory board (a social anthropologist, an ethnologist, a historian, and an architect), the ethnology advisers of the two DRACs, representatives from the departmental archives of four departments, and elected representatives from the regions, municipalities, and municipal associations of the relevant areas. In practice, however, only a relatively stable core of about ten people actively worked on the project, namely park staff, elected representatives from the two regions concerned, and the three authors of this text. As for the activity on the ground, it was structured identically in both regions and consisted of two phases. The first phase (winter 2008) consisted of creating awareness about ICH and the process and was entrusted in part to a project manager recruited for this purpose.\(^\text{15}\) This phase was intended to identify both practitioners wishing to identify and transmit their practices and knowledge, on the one hand, and people interested in participating in the decision-making process, on the other; the second phase (spring 2009) was a definitional phase and consisted of the recruitment of juries, the holding of jury meetings under the guidance of a facilitator and without the presence of the members of the steering committee, and finally, the delivery of their results, in other words the designated entities, to the elected park officials and the elected representatives and other agents of the regions in question.

This brief and factual summary of the process can be made more specific and problematized with reference to the concept of “public” as it is defined and used by the pragmatist philosopher John Dewey (2003) [1927]. According to Joëlle Zask’s commentary on Dewey, “a public is the collection of people who have full access to the facts about the matters that concern them, forming shared judgments about the appropriate way to behave based on these facts, and in possession of the ability to openly express those judgments” (Zask 2008: 177).\(^\text{16}\) The participatory

\(^{14}\) Twelve meetings were held between September 2007 and December 2009.

\(^{15}\) Holder of a master’s in sociology, she was recruited for a four-month contract, running from September to December of 2008.

\(^{16}\) “Un public est l’ensemble des gens ayant un plein accès aux données concernant les affaires qui les concernent, formant des jugements communs quant à la conduite à tenir sur la base de ces données et jouissant de la possibilité de manifester ouvertement ses jugements”. Noël Barbe and Flavie Ailhaud
framework has as its goal, and is based on, the formation of a public and the gradual establishment of its authority. This authority is not granted in advance but develops in the context of a situation whose aim is precisely to seek agreement “within” a public. From this perspective, still following Zask’s commentary on Dewey, a public is diverse, or plural, a composite of publics, a plurality with respect to the singularity of the roles, functions, ranks, or positions occupied by the individuals involved in it, and it is from this perspective that we can consider the specific plurality of the public constituted during the course of the operation.

The public that is constituted is, first and foremost, “a public of stakeholders”, mobilizing around a desire to identify what could be considered ICH. A public, then, that one could hope to see becoming a producer of knowledge and an actor — it is not yet known how — in the designation of an “ICH asset”. This public is brought together, first, by publicity, involving the distribution of a “communication card” by mail, but also passed out in stores, which can introduce a situation of exchange. Then, it is brought together by meetings that are organized in each of the two regions, during which the concept is explained and demonstrated by way of examples before a call is issued for proposals of what might constitute a local ICH entity. At first, we thought that a deliberative public might emerge through volunteers from this first public. However, the very concept of “ICH,” which was not immediately understood nor intuitively grasped, proved to offer too weak a basis for the emergence of this public.

The next public is “a public of project carriers,” that is to say of those who have an “ICH asset” to propose in response to the park’s solicitation. This public of proposals emerges in part from the first public, but it must be recognized here that it is difficult to mobilize practitioners. Even aside from lack of time or of interest, there may be three reasons for this: a poor understanding of the topic and of the difficulty of identifying the concept of ICH and translating it into practice; a poor definition of the stakes involved in an application and of what recognition under the ICH label could provide; and a mismatch, for a given practice, between what it means for the holder and the park’s expectations.

The final public is a “deliberative public”, made up of the members of two citizens’ juries. In Déodatie, the involvement of the development council, during the organization of public meetings in 2008 on the way to the call for applications, helped push the steering committee towards joint recruitment: out of a total of nine recruits, four were brought in through the public meetings or through the activity of the development council; the other five were randomly chosen from the telephone directory after taking age, gender, socio-professional category, regional

---

Note here the absence of UNESCO as a forum that is likely to provide symbolic compensation, with potential political and economic effects. Representatives at the national level showed little interest in the project, and at the local level, the park and the DRACs, through the steering committee, ultimately failed to make the possible benefits of the recognition of a practice clear.

developed this approach in a reflection on the creation of a “house of social history” in Montbéliard (Ailhaud and Barbe 2011).
origin, and primary or secondary residence into account. In the Vosges Saônoises region, meanwhile, because there were no volunteers, the recruitment was entirely random. The goal for each jury was to take a list that had been compiled at the end of the first phase and to select from it one cultural asset that its holder wanted to transmit and to promote: in Déodatie, the list had eight entries, and in Vosges Saônoises it had twelve (see box, below). The first meeting was devoted to disseminating the information necessary for the jury to make its decision: three “experts” (members of the steering committee\textsuperscript{18}) appeared in order to give the board members information about the PNRBV, the notion of ICH and the Convention, and the principles and forms of deliberative democracy. After that first appearance, the members of the steering committee, in particular the “scientists,” did not participate in or attend the juries’ discussions: from March to June 2009, the discussions were moderated by a PNRBV representative\textsuperscript{19} whose function was essentially to make sure that the discussion remained balanced, to allow all participants to express their views, and to make sure that no one limited anyone else’s freedom of expression.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|}
\hline
\textbf{Proposals Examined by the Citizens’ Juries} \\
\hline
\textbf{For the Vosges Saônoises Region} \\
\hline
The baking of traditional bread, Olivier D. (baker) \\
Hiking and bicycle tourism, mountain bike, hybrid bike (bicycle clubs), Marcel B. (Departmental Committee of Haute-Saône) \\
The manufacture of garden tools, Claude G. (blacksmith) \\
Traditional music and dances connected with the spinet, Serge B. (musician and dancer) \\
The restoration of chalots,\textsuperscript{20} Denis R. (craftsman-carpenter), and Claude C. (building craftsman) \\
Basketwork, Jean G. (basketmaker) \\
The rehabilitation and reuse of bread ovens, Claude C. (former building craftsman), and Philippe A. (baker) \\
The creation and marking of hiking trails, Guy B. (hiker, president of the Sainte Marie en fête club) \\
Skills and knowledge related to wood, Georges T. (carpenter and sawyer) \\
Harvesting and knowledge associated with fruit, Bernard H. (Chassardfarm) \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{18} Namely a park representative and, taking turns, two of the three authors of this paper.

\textsuperscript{19} Because of a maternity leave, the project manager who was in charge of the heritage section and who had been monitoring the project was replaced by a person recruited under a temporary contract. This meant that the jury phrase was monitored and moderated by a person who was employed by and who represented the park, but for some of that time that person was an outsider to the project.

\textsuperscript{20} The chalot is a little building attached to a farm, made out of wood and covered in lava tile roofing; these buildings were used to store grain, alcohol, food, family documents, etcetera. Very geographically specific, it is characteristic of the high valleys of the Augronne, Combeauté, and Raddon rivers, between Lorraine and Franche-Comté.
Traditional music and dances, Christine C. (BerdiBerdo-club)
Oral traditions, Valérie M. (Cercle des bonimenteurs (Smoothtalkers’ group))

For Déodatie

Stories about the forest, Jérémi B. (professional storyteller)
The artisanal use of charcuterie processes, Noël M. (butcher)
Guided tour of the St. Joseph mine, M. G. (miner, Association de sauvegarde des mines d’argent de La Croix-aux-mines (Association for the protection of the silver mines of La Croix-aux-mines))
Knowledge and upkeep of orchards, MM. H. and V. (Les croqueurs de pommes-club (Apple crunchers club))
Lorraine goat husbandry, Cécile B. (farmer)
The mycology of the High Vosges, Patrick L. (Société de mycologie des Hautes-Vosges)
The production and practice of the spinet, Aurélien G. (musician and spinetmaker)
The use of draft animals for loading and transportation, upkeep, and agricultural work, Emmanuel F. (equine transportation and agricultural activities)

3 Heritage and Territories Put to the Test

The juries’ expertise in their heritage deliberations was based on two types of “citizen knowledge” (Sintomer 2008). The first of these is the “knowledge of usage”, which leads to citizens being understood as users, in this case belonging to a given territory, and therefore as the people best suited to defining their own needs. Then, in dialogue with technicians or experts, a shared knowledge, useful to the largest number, is constructed, along the model of John Dewey (2003) [1927]. The second kind is “common sense,” or the exercise of subjective reason, which is based on the possibility of transcending one’s own particular interests. This, then, is how, thanks to the possibility of acquiring knowledge and therefore of having an informed opinion, and then thanks to deliberation and debate, a shared idea of the common good can be formed.

In terms of what actually happened on the juries, both juries took their involvement to the point of making recommendations with a view to improving the application process. They paid particular attention to guarding against any kind of discrimination and to setting up rules to establish equal treatment for all the keepers of ICH practices. They examined each of the entries according to the selection criteria (the territorial specificity of the practice or entity, the degree to which it was a “living” practice or entity, how willing its practitioners or caretakers and keepers were to transmit it); they scrutinized each file and, as necessary, held individual meetings with the relevant practitioners and searched for information online. In the end, the heritage entities that they chose were the knowledge and skills to do with the restoration of chalots, for the Vosges Saônoises region, and the use of draft animals, for Déodatie.
The discussions about the final decision, along with the other debates and conversations, show a high level of reflection about heritage, its function as well as its effects. The juries justified their choices by the benefits that the chosen entities bring to the community: those choices crystallized a consensus around the necessity of resorting to old practices in order to respond to current challenges, such as environmental protection and the search for new areas of economic development. Faced with the question of identifying a “community” with an ICH entity, the juries also emphasized the heterogeneity of the populations that had been established for longer or shorter periods in a given territory. Once the geographical area (i.e. the home territory, what is called the *pays*, or “country” in French) has been identified, the very notion of an inhabitant or resident was also strongly questioned: Beyond the *pays* or home territory (“Déodatie country” or “Vosges Saônoises country”), it was the region of the Vosges Mountains that emerged as the geographical entity of reference, but as an “imagined community,” as used by Benedict Anderson (1991), that is a community or territory that depends on the recognition that it is given. Thus, the criterion of regional specificity was constantly subject to discussion: what seemed to be the most typical was not that after all, whether it had to do with a breed of so-called “Lorraine” goats, an appellation which was called into question;\(^{21}\) or with the *chalots*, for which equivalent forms, with the same function, were identified in Galicia and in northern Portugal;\(^ {22}\) or with the spinet, which was apparently not a typically Vosgian musical instrument after all because it belongs to the zither family.\(^ {23}\)

The connection with the past was ultimately in the background or else hidden, with the evidence of a non-mechanized practice (the use of draft animals) in Déodatie or a vague allusion to the “memory of our traditions of yesteryear” in the Vosges Saônoises area considered enough to justify it. By not focusing their line of questioning on local specificity or on things being anchored in the past (because such a line of questioning had proven to be in vain); by pursuing, among the criteria they had available, the capacity of a project or an asset to be expanded in time and in space, both turned towards the future and benefiting the largest number of people; and by construing heritage as a resource and not just as something to be made a fuss over, the juries somehow inscribed themselves into a dynamic and constructivist conception of the space or the territory for which they were required to define or invent an entity of reference (among others). “A territory,” writes Bruno Latour, “is first and foremost the list of entities on which one depends” (Latour 2010: 13).

In effect, the juries took the situation as an examination (among other things) whose contribution was not to map their territory, which is what an inventory would have done, but to establish the territory in its livability, to bring it up to date

---

21 Citizens’ jury for Déodatie, April 30 2009 meeting (Fraize village).
22 Citizens’ jury for Vosges Saônoises, June 6 2009 meeting (Fougerolles village).
23 Citizens’ jury for Déodatie, May 8 2009 meeting (Fraize village).
in relation to the other entities (social, economic, political, etcetera) on which everyone depends – looked at from that perspective, territory is not reducible to geographical boundaries or to an administrative area (ibid.).

Given the pathway that was opened by the Convention, this experimentation shows how much the notion of heritage, whether tangible or intangible, can “move” when it is entrusted to the inhabitants of a territory. Specifically, the slippage brought about here, moving from the object to knowledge and to practice, contributes to the freeing of heritage from an essentialist concept of territory and to identifying it with a common good, belonging to a new political register that emphasizes the ability of people to be and to act as inhabitants, residents, citizens. Individuals and communitarian identities – based on a shared past – give way to citizens and to territorial identities, experienced as a negotiation in the present and a projection into the future organized around shared living.

4 Some Comments in Summary

In view of the formulation of the concrete results, that is to say the final choices of the citizens’ juries, and taking into account the time and the energy spent over the course of three years, we could conceivably conclude that a mountain had given birth to a mouse. This feeling, to which the authors of this paper have occasionally yielded, was recently expressed in a somewhat ambiguous commentary written by Christian Hottin:

An inventory constitutes a very low level of recognition: it is simply a census. At this stage of preservation, the participatory process, which can sometimes be very long, leads to the designation of the very same entities that were already identified by previous ethnographical work. This is, for example, what happened during the experiment in participatory democracy carried out in the territory of the Ballons des Vosges Regional Nature Park: after several months of meetings, the inhabitants of the territory selected techniques or practices that had already long been identified as ethnological heritage for these territories. The final result is that the operation – which is long and delicate – is relatively costly (Hottin 2013: 59).24

24 “L’inventaire constitue un très faible niveau de reconnaissance: il est un simple recensement. À ce stade de sauvegarde, le processus participatif, parfois très long, conduit à designer des éléments identiques à ceux déjà repérés par des travaux anthropologiques antérieurs. C’est par exemple ce qui s’est produit lors de l’expérience de démocratie participative conduit sur le territoire du Parc naturel régional des Ballons des Vosges: au terme de plusieurs mois de réunions, les habitants du territoire ont sélectionné des techniques ou pratiques déjà identifiées depuis longtemps comme patrimoine ethnologique sur ces mêmes territoires. Reste que le coût de l’opération – longue et délicate – est relativement élevé”. The import of this remark becomes clearer in the context of knowing that Christian Hottin is a heritage curator, former head of the Ethnological Heritage Mission and currently connected to the Steering Department for Scientific Research and Politics in the General Directorate for Heritage of the Ministry of Culture and Communication.
We believe that if there is going to be criticism, it should not be based on a comparison, even if expressed via roundabout hints, between benefits and costs when the benefits and the costs do not refer to the same things. As Hottin surely understood, knowledge is not the same thing as acknowledgment (Honneth 2007; cf. Groth in this volume), so it does not make sense to set acknowledgment cost against benefit of knowledge and then make a point of the mismatch between the two.

The work that was done, within a unique inquiry format, to allow practices to emerge that were already perfectly well known cannot at all be reduced to a simple process of identification. If that had been the only goal, as we already emphasized in the context of the juries’ assessment of the concept of the territory, even a “simple listing,” consisting of duly documented records, would have been enough. But our experiment arose from calling into question the monopoly of scientific expertise and of the strength of its authority in favor of a confrontation between kinds of skill and knowledge, ways of knowing things, and kinds of expertise, in a search not for knowledge but for “empowerment.”

The starting point – which we would defend to this day – was the idea that as a mode of acting on the past-present and a way of saying what is important to us with respect to “living in time,” ICH cannot remain a realm reserved for (ethnological) experts; it cannot be exclusively subject to scientific authority but must instead face the scrutiny of different “authorities” and various modes of knowledge. It rests on the ability of each citizen to deliberate in a reasonable fashion, that is to say to submit to “the force of the better argument,” (J. Habermas, cited by Blondiaux and Sintomer 2002: 24) and to look beyond his or her particular interests. We were aiming to build a shared heritage expertise that would engage both the inhabitants and the elected officials of a territory, regional nature park leaders and scientists, all of whom would then be involved in various capacities in the decision-making process.

From this perspective, in the context of the critique of the investment cost of the deliberative process, what is important to us is that we managed to carry out this deliberative experiment and that, betting on its impact as a model and its performative character (what it does and what it makes happen), we can imagine it being conducted again, in such as a way as to contribute to the rise of new modes of heritage and cultural action.

---

25 As Bruno Latour also writes, anticipating the challenges faced by the inhabitants of a territory every time an item on the list that constitutes that territory (such as high-speed broadband or a local service) is added or taken away, “‘territoire’ is a word that depends much more on time than on space” (Latour 2010: 16).
26 « La force du meilleur argument ». 
27 Note that the Operational Guidelines reflect a commitment to establish if not a shared expertise then at least a partnership between experts and practitioners in the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage (Chapter III and IV, paragraph109: http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00026, <accessed April 01, 2013>.
However, we do recognize some shortcomings in the overall picture of deliberative democracy and of our experiment in particular. It is not so much a sense that we “did all that for this” that grips us as it is a sense, if not of failure, then at least of mistakes in the process and of inconclusive results compared to how much was invested.

Looking back, this feeling can be expressed by way of discrepancies between, on the one hand, a smooth, factual presentation (on glossy paper, in a PowerPoint, or on a website\textsuperscript{28} reporting on an experiment which, if it did not succeed, at least achieved tangible results (the citizens’ juries met, they completed their assigned tasks, and the chosen elements underwent the validation procedures – see below), and on the other hand all the work that therefore became invisible or was done behind the scenes in order for those things to happen: work that is not at all smooth, that gropes along, shot through with conflicts and misunderstandings. The steering committee was where these tensions began. For one thing, due to the nature of its composition, it was, to some extent, in conflict with the goal of participation. Because of our desire to break with the inventory process, we deliberately opted not to intervene in the content. And yet, in spite of all that, we did not eradicate the effects of authority; we simply moved them, and the steering committee had all the appearance of a command post, in fact maintaining a hierarchy between its members and the members of the juries. In addition, the steering committee did not have a specific function but operated along what could be called the classical lines of a collaboration between an institution set up to act and scientists who play an advisory role, on a voluntary basis no less, to that institution – and this mode turned out to be poorly suited to the participatory process. The result was that there were moments when things flared up among the scientists themselves and between the park’s team and the scientists – especially in 2008, the crucial year in which the framework was defined and in which the park team’s “interessement”\textsuperscript{29} by the scientists, and vice versa, played a role.

Following Susan Leigh-Star, co-inventor of the idea of the “boundary object” (Star and Griesmer 1989; Star 2010), we should pay attention to the discrepancy mentioned above and treat it as a fertile anomaly, and in order to do this we need to work on revealing the “knowledge infrastructure” (Star 2010), or in other words “the invisible underpinnings of the action” (Trompette and Vinck 2009: 17). Put briefly, the steering committee functioned as “knowledge infrastructure” based on at least two boundary objects, namely the Convention and the idea of participation; in other words, both of these entities took on the form of boundary objects in action, in the sense that people acted on and with them (ibid.: 20). It is a characteristic of the boundary object that it supports cooperation, contributing to a working together without the need to obtain consensus among the actors, either before-


\textsuperscript{29} We are using the word here in its sense as used in the sociology of translation (Callon 1986).
hand or during the action – or else, if such a consensus is present, it is always very fragile (ibid.: 21). The value of this concept here is threefold: it allows us to understand, first, how the experiment was able to succeed in spite of crises and in spite of the fact that the problems, especially those having to do with “interessement”, that gave rise to those crises were never solved; second, how and why a participatory framework or mechanism could be set up to apply to heritage without each actor within it actually having renounced his or her a priori conception of heritage (thus, action based on the primacy of knowledge continues to be a preferred option for the Park); and third, how and why a participatory framework was able to be built on a segmentation of “publics” and in particular a separation between the steering committee and the juries and why the goal of shared authority did not finally result in a confrontation between authorities, which was carefully avoided.

In addition, we find it noteworthy that the authority granted to these juries stopped right before any actual decisions about implementing the results of their deliberations. It must also be noted that following the deliberative phase, the PNRBV set up working groups – in which some of the members of the juries participated, with the idea that they would thus be able to safeguard the recommendations the juries had made – which were intended to begin the process of validation for the entities that had been chosen: for the use of draft animals, structuring the industry and raising awareness and support within communities for the development of new uses for this mode of energy (transportation, maintenance of green spaces, etcetera); for the chalots, evaluating local resources and inventing new uses for and ways of transmitting the knowledge and skills related to the chalots. In this latter case, a contest was launched in 2010 to collect ideas about new applications, in particular for techniques of assembling wood. The contest involved about fifteen teams, which proposed architectural, micro-architectural, and design projects, from which three winners were selected.30 This phase, which was carried out under the park’s auspices, was intended to ensure an active “presence” of the heritage entities in people’s everyday life; however, the participation in this phase was lower than in the previous one. Although one of the members of the Vosges Saônoises citizens’ jury also sat on the jury that chose the winners of the following contest, the only real carryover from the citizens’ jury was the sense that citizens were being given choices, but there was no actual debate on this new panel.

Finally, now, we find ourselves wondering about the very meaning of participatory democracy and the possible ways that it can be put into practice. An attempt to replicate this experiment, once again on a micro-territory within the PNRBV, as currently envisaged, could lead us to ask a number of questions, some of them questions we have already asked before. Should the word “democracy,” a pivotal term for so many political debates beginning with Plato, be coupled with “participatory” or “deliberative?” The terms are as ambivalent as they ever were, ranging

30 The three winners were: an adaptable piece of wooden furniture for a child’s room, an office space, or even an emergency move; a picnic area; and an adaptable interior design kit. Market research was still required in order for these projects to be implemented.
from zero participation to maximum deliberation, indicating true engagement in public affairs. To some extent, the agreements are always tentative and are, each time anew, the result of negotiations between goals that sometimes conflict with each other (for example, empowerment versus the lubrication of the social bond). How can we inform the connection between past experience and future experiments (Castoriadis 1999: 161)? If deliberative processes call the system of delegating responsibility to political representatives and to technical experts into question, then ambiguity results when it is these very same representatives and experts who are the ones who organize those processes. There is then a risk that these processes may only be false fronts for technocracy or for political exploitation. Democracy as a far-reaching movement (Rancière 2005) would then run aground against the use of deliberative frameworks as a governing technique, based on the reduction of the experience to a technical formula. Therefore, we believe that it is important to remain vigilant and to collaborate on inventing ways to become bearers of social critique and of frameworks for separation, in line with the goal that Jacques Rancière sets for democracy. “Democracy,” he writes, “is neither the form of government that allows the oligarchy to reign in the name of the people nor the form of society that regulates the power of commodities, [but it is] the action that constantly wrests the monopoly on public life from oligarchic governments and omnipotence over lives from wealth” (ibid.: 105).
References


