

## Documentary film: a way to enhance research outreach

The Monts d'Ardèche regional natural Park chose in 2017 to implement a research in geography about industrial heritage. As all regional natural Parks in France, and as a difference to national natural Park, its goal is not only to preserve natural landscapes and sites but also to insure territorial development in rural areas. That in parts is why, it was very important that the result of the research could be shared with the local population.

The research was conducted through a PHD thesis from April 2017 to December 2021 and the outreach has been a constant concern. Local conferences, decision making supports and communication medium were organized to that purpose. But the most important project was the production of a documentary film, *Empreinte vivante, le patrimoine industriel en Ardèche (Living trace, the industrial heritage in Ardèche)* released in October 2021.

This paper tends to give a feedback and analyze these approaches. It explains the reasons of an action oriented research, the first actions built to that aim and the experience of the production of a documentary film.

### The basis of an action oriented research

This first part aims to explain why the research was action oriented. Most of the elements presented here are developed in my thesis (VIGNE, 2021).

### The origins story

The Monts d'Ardèche regional natural Park was created in 2001 around a specific aim: help a better appreciation of local chestnuts (*illustration 1*). It led to the AOC label in 2006 (for *Appellation d'origine contrôlée*, Controlled Designation of Origin, a French label) and the PDO one in 2014 (for Protected Designation of Origin, the European label). But as soon as the first charter of 2001-2013, which described the Park project, the industrial heritage is spotted as a territorial characteristic, as strongly as the agricultural heritage. A series of actions were taken to re-activate these heritages : exhibition about mineral springs and their exploitation, labeling system for mineral water still producing, exhibition about water mills, visits of silk mills, book editing about silk mills, aids to redo the museum of silk mills, study on how to enhance the jewelry expertise, backing the re-use an old silk mill for artistic creation, safety works on mine sites, exhibition and editing about industrial chimneys, creation of art works about industrial landscapes, and inventories.



The Park has also joined a group of associations which organized an informal group about industrial heritage in 2008. The local associations have had an interest in industrial heritage for a long time: for example the first conference of the *Mémoire d'Ardèche et Temps Présent* association (Memories and present time in Ardèche) in 1983 is about industrial history and the first museum about silk mill (*Ecomusée du moulinage de Chirols*: Chirols eco museum silk mill) is founded in 1988 (*illustration 2*). The industrial heritage group started to just

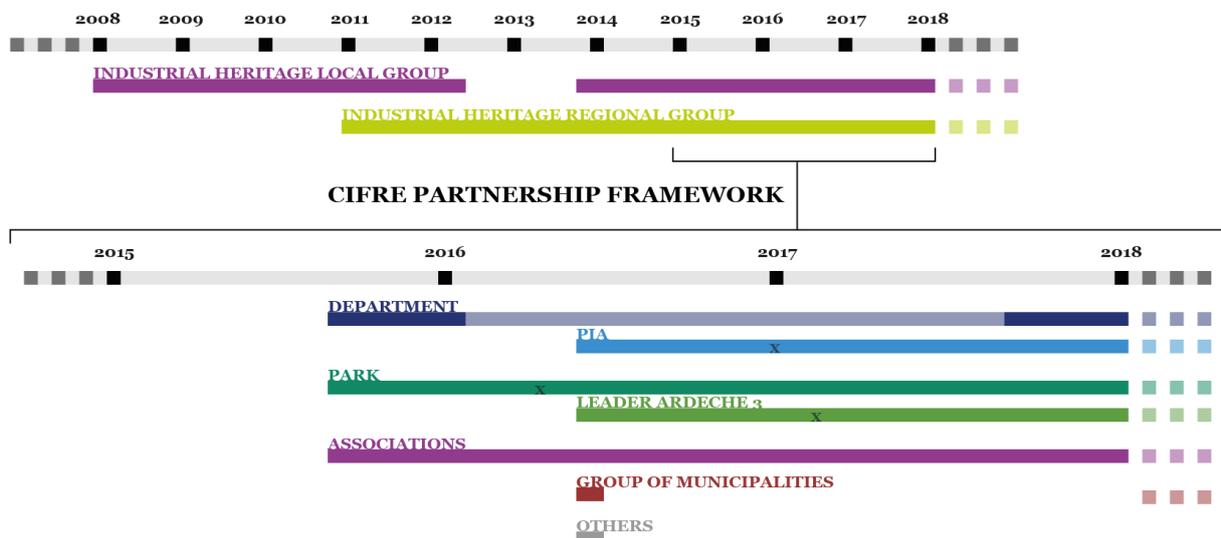
exchange information but in 2012 they started to create common projects: the inventory of silk mills on the Park perimeter, then the inventory of *Ensembles industriels remarquables* (outstanding industrial complexes) launch by a regional association *Patrimoine Aurhalpin* in 2014, followed by a book in 2015 and a conference, an issue of a journal, an exhibition and its catalog in 2016. When the

project of a research about industrial heritage appears around this time, the group was very supportive.

I followed closely the most recent of these projects: I was a Park intern for the inventory of silk mills and I was working for Patrimoine Auralpin for the inventory of outstanding industrial complexes. It's very common in CIFRE thesis (for Industrial Convention of Formation through REsearch) in human and social sciences that the PHD student is the initiator of the thesis and that this project is linked to personal and professional experiences (Collectif, 2011).

### The framework

The CIFRE thesis is the chosen form from the beginning of the project. Because this policy allows a kind of partnership between a private or public organization and a university, a lot of action oriented research is produced that way and that was immediately my goal. The partnership between the Park and Grenoble Alpes University is no exception. One of the first drafts of the thesis project specifies that *"it is about identifying in which cases the industrial heritage could be a resource for local development and use it this way"*. The thesis is followed in PACTE laboratory, which is linked to regional sciences and the notion of *"territorial resource"* (GUMUCHIAN and PECQUEUR, 2007) and *"patrimonial resource"* (LANDEL and SENIL, 2016) so the theoretical basis and the Park's need seem to be aligned.



But the framework of the project is a little more complicated than that (*illustration 3*). In 2016, when the Park accepted to support the thesis, it did not have the financial resources to do it alone. A whole year passes during the search for financial supports. The Park gathered the possible partners: group of municipality, organization about tourism, urbanism and industrial outreach, associations. Everyone acknowledges the interest of the project but none of them have the capacity of funding it. The possibility of using crowdfunding is even briefly entertained. The financial aids finally come from two organizations: the European LEADER program (Links between the Rural Economy and Development Actions) implemented by a local action group named Ardèche3 and the nation program PIA (*Programme d'Investissement d'Avenir – Program for Investments for Future*) supported by the Ardèche Department. The last one offers thesis grants so it doesn't create news obligations. But the first one funds the thesis through a call for project about sustainable rural urbanism : the practical goals like making an inventory, proposing local actions for citizens, working in network and producing tools for decision making support, are promoted. The same LEADER program helped the Park in 2020 when the first three year contract stopped but the thesis wasn't done: a new one and a half year contract is drawn, only on actions this time.

The partnership framework has effects of the research itself. In the first place, it modifies the study perimeter (*illustration 4*). At the beginning of the thesis, the aim was to inventory industrial heritages

on all the departments (335 municipalities) but that was too big of a task for a 3 years contract, knowing that inventory was only a part of the research methodology. The perimeter was reduced but trying to cover most of the Park perimeter, most of the Ardèche3 perimeter and respecting the municipality groups with which a part of the actions was developed.

### The relation between research and action

Now that the “why” of the action oriented research was explored, this part proposes to consider the “how”: what kind of actions are implemented and what are their relations to research.

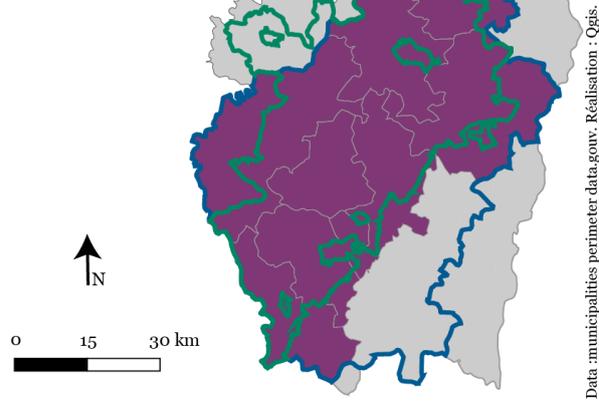
#### Actions for research: the local conferences

The CIFRE thesis allows producing data with “*participant observation*” (CHAPOULIE, 2000). Contrary to a lot of research, where the PHD student is only on his or her study perimeter during a limited time, the CIFRE PHD student is always in his or her study perimeter: he or she lives in it and can observe it daily. I also was a project manager, planning events, networking with partners, responding to local questions about industrial heritage. I collected six notebooks full of information.

Even more, the planning of local conferences, named “*Histoires d’industries*” (Stories of industries), creates the opportunity to use “*observant participation*” (SOULE, 2007). The researcher is a participant of the experimentation that he or she uses to collect data. For an event, I organize a conference, a visit or a projection of a film about local industrial heritage with the group of municipalities, then I present my research (not the results but the questions) and at the end of the event I propose to the participants to respond to a short survey presented as a postcard asking what kind of action they wanted to see for industrial heritage and which organization was better suited for

#### Legend

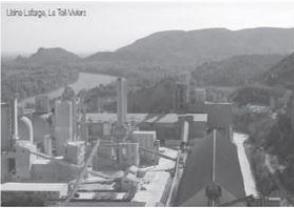
-  Department perimeter
-  Group of municipality perimeters
-  LEADER Ardèche 3 perimeter
-  Park des Monts d’Ardèche perimeter
-  Study perimeter



Data :municipalities perimeter data.gov. Réalisation : Qgis.







Ma proposition d'action :



Qui pourrait faire ça ?

---



---



---



---

Mon contact (nom, prénom, commune, courriel) :

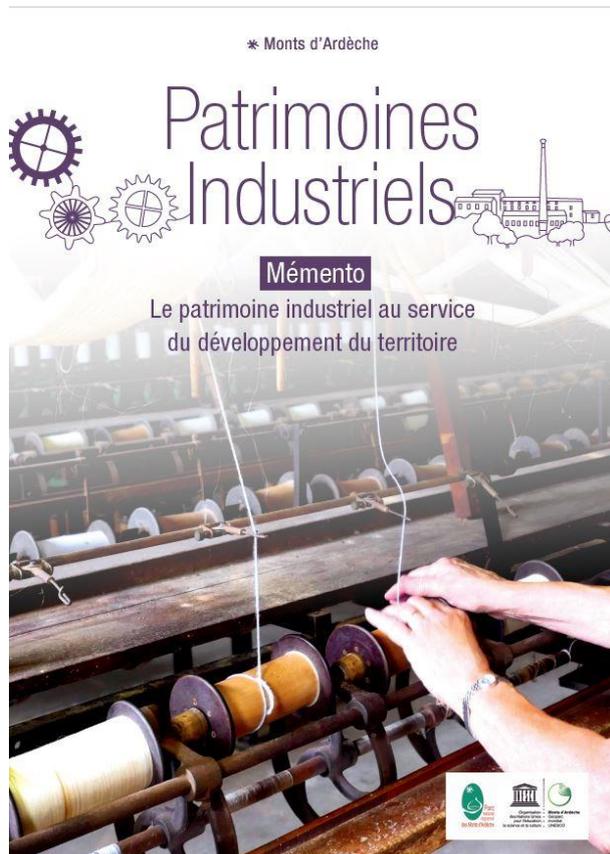


implanting it (*illustration 5*). 78 propositions were collected during ten events.

Of course, the local event are also a moment of outreach toward the citizens and some other conferences were organized only in this purpose, as publishing in local books and journals and interviewing in local newspapers and radios.

Research for action: the tools for decision making process

But the most important and delicate work is how to transform research into action. From the beginning, it was very clear that the thesis itself was not a good way to extend the research into the local communities: other ways had to be found.



The Park already have a collection of publications destined to political decision-maker or project leader, called *Memento* (Reminder): it's a short brochure, presenting technical elements with a lot of examples, images and diagrams. The one on industrial heritages was launched in September 2021 and called "*The industrial heritage serving territorial development*" (*illustration 6*). It is proposing four courses of action from knowing the heritage better, to protect it, enhance it and support the projects around it. The Park also has another collection more for general public, called *Tout savoir sur* (Everything you need to know about). A draft of the content has been made but is yet to be published (waiting for the finalization of school oriented projects).

The data of inventory, around 700 industrial sites, have been mapped, municipalities by municipalities, in order to broadcast the knowledge as much as possible. Each group of municipality received an evaluation composed by the mapping and historical elements on each site and an analysis of ongoing process of

heritage-making (protected site, museums, cultural and touristic re-uses, historical industries, itineraries...).

A new level: the documentary film

The last project was the biggest: launching a documentary movie about Ardèche industrial heritages.

Structuration

The idea came from the informal group of associations: after their actions in 2016, they were looking for a new way to make industrial heritages known by the local communities. A plan to make a documentary film hatched in 2018. The Park proposed to implement it, drafting a called for projects in 2020 and financing it through regional funds. Some of the members of the group gathered in a small comity to insure the follow-up of the project. The decision was made that the film director chosen will have total control on the film he was making, even if the comity was here to advise him. The film was meant to be short, 25 to 35 minutes, to allow its diffusion with schools.

16 propositions were sent to the Park. In June 2020, Christian Tran was chosen by the comity and the Park officials to produce the film. He has already worked a lot in Ardèche, producing films about local services (post office, schools, and hospitals in rural areas) and heritage (*Les génies de la Grotte*



*Chauvet* – The Grands Masters of the Chauvet Cave). He also worked a lot around artists (Sima in 2009, Barcelo in 2016, Yankel in 2020). He is born in Ardèche and knows pretty well the territory but has never particularly interacted with industrial heritage. In the presentation of his project, he offers to enhance the “*human aspect*” of heritage (*illustration 7*).

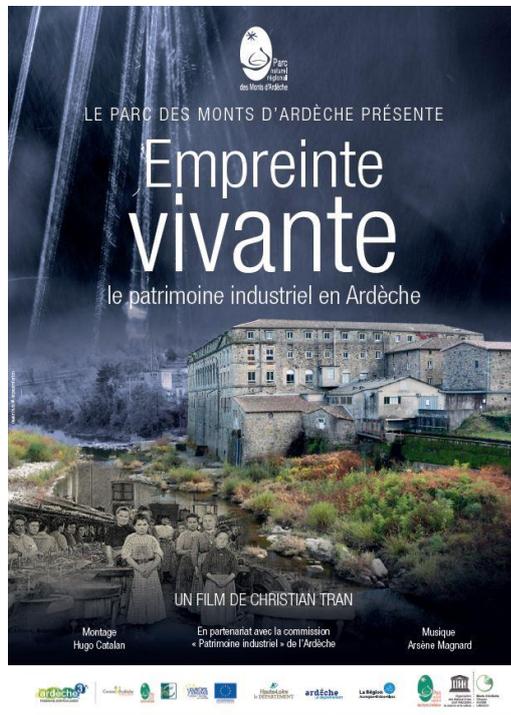
#### The links between research and film

My role as project manager was to help Christian Tran understand the complexity of industrial heritage in Ardèche: small sites spread along the river, mainly working with silk but not only, with multiple uses today that can become links between the past and the future. We toured around Ardèche for around 10 days, meeting project leaders and visiting sites during the summer of 2020. We also exchange a lot about my research and the questions it involved.

Christian decided around this time to make a film about the way that people look at industrial legacies and make them into heritage by the stories they tell and the way they spread them (*illustration 8*). That is linked to my thesis a lot: I too read differently the things that come from the past (legacies) and the heritage making process that transforms them into something people want to share. Because of it, he filmed a lot of the people we met together, myself, and some more. He had to work during multiple lock down due to the pandemic situation: he decided to film people without talking to them and then come back for sound recording only. The archive department of Ardèche also sent him a lot of historical material to work with. Some of the people he met gave him more. He had this idea to mix them with present views to try to make people understand the links between past and future and the dreams that they carry.



One year later, Christian had hundreds of hours of film and sound recording and hundreds of images from the past. It was impossible to reduce it to a 35 minutes film: it lasts 1h30. The film is in 7 parts. After a short introduction, different industrial sectors are discovered by the public through the stories that people tell on the screen: silk, mines, leather, automobile, lime and cement, and jewelry. The last part shows particularly the role of *transformative heritage-making* (VIGNE, 2021) that is to say how social innovation can mix with heritage to transform the way we inhabit the rural areas.



The film has been projected 6 times in the presence of Christian from October to December 2021 (*illustration 10*). A lot of people were assisting, the movie theaters and places were crowded: it is particularly amazing because the pandemic situation has drastically reduced the usual public of movie theater. Christian also showed it to a class of *collège* (11 to 14 years old) and discuss with them afterwards. 8 new projections are planned from January to March 2022. It will continue to be broadcasted this way until the summer of 2022: after that it will be streamed freely online from the Park website. A version subtitled in English will also be available.

At this time, we considered the documentary film to be a great success, more so than any of the other actions implemented. It allows new public to discover industrial heritage and present them with actual element of research, even if the theoretical language is obviously banned.

## Bibliography

- CHAPOULIE, J.-M. (2000), « Le travail de terrain, l'observation des actions et des interactions, et la sociologie », dans *Sociétés contemporaines*, n°40, pp. 5-27, consulté en ligne : <https://www.cairn.info/revue-societes-contemporaines-2000-4-page-5.htm>.
- COLLECTIF (2011), *Le dispositif CIFRE en sciences humaines et sociales : une génération hybride, entre recherche et action*, premier séminaire du collectif Recherche Doctorale Impliquée (REDI), 2 décembre 2011, Lyon, 41 p, consulté en ligne : <https://docplayer.fr/25154825-Le-dispositif-cifre-en-sciences-humaines-et-sociales-une-generation-hybride-entre-recherche-et-action.html>.
- GUMUCHIAN, H. & PECQUEUR, B. (2007), *La ressource territoriale*, Economica, Paris, 252 P.
- LANDEL, P.-A. & SENIL, N. (2016), « De la ressource territoriale à la ressource patrimoniale », dans GLON, E. et PECQUEUR, B., *Au cœur des territoires créatifs. Proximités et ressources territoriales*, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, Rennes, 9p., consulté en ligne : <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-01387636/>.
- SOULE, B. (2007), « Observation participante ou participation observante ? Usages et justifications de la notion de participation observante en sciences sociales », dans *Recherches qualitatives*, vol. 1, n°27, pp. 127-140, consulté en ligne : <http://www.recherche-qualitative.qc.ca/revue/les-collections/edition-reguliere/>.
- VIGNE, F. (2021), *La patrimonialisation transformative : les héritages industriels dans la transformation des ruralités.. Le Cas des Monts d'Ardèche*. Université Grenoble Alpes : thèse de doctorat, Géographie, sous la direction de FOURNY, M.-C. et LANDEL, P.-A., 370 p.