Heritage Production and Local Community: A study about the development and the perceptions of Montivilliers' heritage

Valentine Sophie Marie Villain
Abstract

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Having heritage can be a challenge and a benefit for the local community. But, when the time comes to change it or implement tourism, it can become tricky. This case study of Montivilliers, a town in Normandy, France, will go through the different interactions between the different actors within the community and the challenges and benefits that come from the decisions made on the different heritages throughout the last decades. With interviews from the local community, this thesis invites you to take a deep into the perceptions and the mindsets of this community on their heritages and tourism implementation.
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1. Introduction

1.1. Statement of Interest

As a student in the Sustainable Destination Development master program, I have encountered several cases connected to sustainability. Mostly, I am interested in heritage sites being at the centre of tourism planning and how their preservation and conservation are relevant for tourism to be implemented. While doing the Applied Heritage track, I felt that one of the primary aspects of sustainability within cultural heritage tourism is to reflect on the locality and let the community work with the different stakeholders. Henceforth, this research will focus on these main emphases.

During my internship in Italy, I learned a lot about community participation and involvement in tourism planning thanks to being part of a research team for two European projects. These projects were linked to community participation in their cultural heritage tourism development. While understanding the different specificities of the places we were working with, I wondered about my hometown and how they were dealing with their/our cultural heritage and sustainable development. Montivilliers, a small town in Normandy, France, with several diverse cultural and natural heritage and a plan on enhancing them, was an obvious choice for me as a case study. These heritages are important not only for the history of the town but also for its development. Being an insider into this community can help to understand in a deeper sense the situation of this town, but it could also help on a bigger scale with other towns having these types of heritage in France or the world dealing with implementing tourism for their heritage. In a way, it was interesting for me to see how the community and the local government have planned to redefine their different heritages and how the different spaces in the town will be changed throughout the process. Overall, I thought it would be useful to take into consideration a town where tourism was not the main priority but something that is trying to be implemented with past and failed attempts and see how the community in all its aspects is dealing with it. It is also important on a more personal level, to see if the community which I am part of is trying to plan tourism in a sustainable way or not.
1.2. Research Aim

The research aim is to understand how the different community actors of Montivilliers are engaging in the tourism branding and marketing of their heritage sites. This specific case study can help in understanding how different local actors can participate in heritage production through tourism branding and marketing and shape cultural heritage tourism through understanding the different mindscapes involved. The community's participation in the tourism branding of the town might lead to different feelings such as a certain pride, trust and a share of identity within the said community as well as the place they are all sharing. (Moayerian et al. 2022). But how do you keep up this pride and identity? This is why, it is important to know how the different actors of the community the local government, the associations and the inhabitants are creating and helping within the heritage production along with how they can be impacted by it. Not only the community but also the heritage sites themselves can have repercussions. Indeed, the heritage production on heritage sites can lead to some decisions such as leaving aside some heritages that don’t fit the plan. Understanding which heritages were chosen to be part of the heritage production and tourism branding will be relevant for the overall research. Understanding the way, the local actors are restoring, rehabilitating and redefining these places through their tourism plan can help comprehend the community’s own perspectives on the matter.

Heritage production needs to be evaluated at a case study level because the community knows the place better than anyone which is why Montivilliers, a town in Normandy, France was chosen. This town has been dealing with the rehabilitation and redefinition through heritage production for quite a while but is currently dealing with the redesigning of its tourism plan with heritage production of its main branded heritages. It will be analysed chronologically through a broader approach, first with the former renovation and redefinition of projects and heritages to finally finish with the main ongoing cultural and natural heritage projects: the renovation of the abbey and the natural walk of La Sente des Rivières.
2. Concepts and Delimitations

To understand the research aim, it is crucial to define clearly the different concepts linked to community, tourism, sustainability, heritage production, cultural heritage and mindscapes. This part is the theory part where concepts are defined and explained while in the findings part, the concepts are put into the case study and understood at this level.

2.1 Community-based tourism and Sustainable Tourism

By the beginning of the sixties, scholars, researchers, economists and biologists started taking into consideration global and local issues in terms of environmental and social matters. (Page and Connell, 2014). When the UN took these matters seriously, through several years the term Sustainability arose and was defined (Page and Connell, 2014). It is the “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future generations”. (WCED, 1987, p.41)

While having this sustainability in the talks in some of the higher instances of society, the tourism industry was having rapid growth after the Second World War and was still rising while the sustainability talks were happening. (Pearce, 1999) Tourism was taking a considerable place in society with issues coming around. Therefore, sustainable tourism came to life. Intertwined with the sustainability definition, sustainable tourism is “tourism which is economically viable but does not destroy the resources on which the future of tourism will depend, notably the physical environment and the social fabric of the host community” (Swarbrooke, 1999, p.3)

Thus, one of the main parts of the sustainable tourism definition is to respect the sociocultural authenticity of host communities which is trying to conserve their cultural heritage while trying an intercultural understanding and tolerance. (Page and Connell, 2014). Community-based tourism was taken into consideration as community empowerment is the most important aspect of having a sustainable tourism industry. (Moayerian et al. 2022). First described by Murphy in 1988. It is a certain type of tourism thinking which helps the creation of community empowerment and planning management of over-tourism for marginalised communities (Dolezal and Novelli, 2022). But in this case study, Community-Based tourism is the fact that the community is given empowerment of the tourism planning and heritage production which leads to collaboration, partnerships and capacity building of the said community. (Dolezal and Novelli, 2022) It also helps the community to develop tourism their own way knowing how the destination is and how it could fit their own life. (Page and Connell, 2014). With this collaboration, a sense of identity is created and therefore linked to trust and participation in different themes such as the tourism industry. (Moayerian et al. 2022). The community is also one of the best vessels to promote their own town as they are themselves ambassadors. (Dahlgaard-Park, 2015)

Having community-based tourism within the destination has a lot of benefits. First, the economic benefits with local employment and local economic development especially for local entrepreneurs. (Simpson, 2008) Second, the environmental benefits can be seen as improving the environment with structures and plans to avoid any degradation of the natural resources as well as encouraging the awareness by the local community of their own environmental assets. (Simpson, 2008) Third, the building of skills and influence can be seen as the power to influence local government policies,
enhance the different skills, build capacity as a community and empower them. (Simpson, 2008) Last but not least, the sociocultural benefits are seen as improving the cultural understanding of the community and improving the social infrastructure for the residents and their well-being which leads to safety and security. (Simpson, 2008) One of the last positive aspects of community-based tourism is that it leads to the preservation of the natural and cultural heritage that the community possesses. (Dolezal and Novelli, 2022).

2.2. Cultural Heritage and Cultural Heritage Tourism

Indeed, a town's cultural heritage can be the main tourist attraction and preserving and conserving it can be a challenge. But what is cultural heritage? It can be divided into two notions: culture and heritage. First, “culture is defined as the complex and constantly changing set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features” (Labadi, Gould, 2015, p.200) “such as the beliefs, the artistic and material products, and the social institutions that characterize a society or social group.” (Aunkrisa and Metin, 2018, p.184) Heritage cannot have a set definition as the essence of the concept is always evolving and developing. (Birukou et al. 2009) Heritage is defined as “the assets that are or may be inherited, treasured materials and qualities which have been passed on from previous generations, such as historical buildings and cultural traditions”. (Tansukhanan, 2016, p.185). This one definition of heritage is undoubtedly linked to culture. Heritage is substantially about the tangible aspect but there is an intangible aspect as well that UNESCO pinpointed as “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 recognise as part of their cultural heritage.” (UNESCO, 2003, p.5)

Here, it is important to mention that because our case study is setting in France, the definition of heritage in French and what it means needs to be developed. In English, Heritage represents one word for two words in French which are héritage and patrimoine. (Grosgeorge, 2011) To have it clearer, the héritage is the total of all the patrimoine of someone which are most of the time tangible objects, properties... when this someone dies. (Grosgeorge, 2011) Patrimoine is also more personal than Heritage in English (Lowenthal, 1998). It first refers to the things you have inherited from your parents but also has a broader aspect of embracing the legacy of distant ancestors which can be cultural. (Lowenthal, 1998) So, when I was mentioning the Montivilliers’ cultural heritage to her interview participants, I was referencing to the patrimoine of the town.

If cultural heritage can be defined out of these two concepts, it would be “the intangible and tangible assets that are developed by the community and handed down to future generations, including practices, customs, and artistic expression” (Aunkrisa and Metin, 2018, p.185) Therefore the community-based tourism is relevant for the case study as the community developed those cultural heritage resources, which is evident to let them be in charge of the tourism planning of the cultural heritage tourism.

This type of tourism can be explicating as “visits by persons from outside the host community motivated wholly or in part by interest in historical, artistic, scientific, lifestyle, or cultural offerings of a community, region, group, or institution” (Silberberg, 1995, p.136). So, implementing tourism on the cultural heritage of the town helps the community value the past and have different ways of seeing their resources and culture. (Boniface and Fowler, 1993) Implementing this type of tourism is not easy.
It must deal with resident habitation, heritage conservation and visitor satisfaction which can be a challenge to find an overall balance. (Li and Hunter, 2015) It also needs to have the right branding and marketing strategy to create a sustainable heritage production.

### 2.3 Spaces and Mindscapes

To create an efficient heritage production, the idea of space must be defined. Henri Lefebvre wrote about the theory of the production of space. This theory starts with the fact that humans while producing something are rallying spatial elements such as resources and tools in a logical sense to arrange the various actions they are doing. (Fuchs, 2019) They are producing social relations and use values to create a social space.

The social space has different social relations: reproduction and production. Seen as both the field of action and the basis of action which relates to “everything that is produced.” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 101) It cannot be seen as a thing or a container. (Fuchs, 2019) A social space has physical and conceptual boundaries which are socially produced. But it diffuses and overlaps other spaces at the same time. Space from an analytical perspective refers to localities, cities, regions, landscapes, and even whole countries. (Dahlgaard-Park, 2015) Within the space, some commodities are put into it, which are produced, exchanged and consumed. (Fuchs, 2019) In a sense, every human being is space, has its own space producing itself into the space which also is producing that space. In short, “they have a space and are in this space.” (Lefebvre, 1991, p.294) Space is a product and a means of production, the result and the cause as well as the product and producer. (Fuchs, 2019)

In his theory, Lefebvre refers to three level of social space which is “the perceived social practices”, “the conceived representation of space” and “the lived spaces of representation”. (Lefebvre, 1991) From a capitalist perspective, as Lefebvre refers to, space is seen as planned and organized with two opposing perspectives: the abstract space and the lived space of everyday life. (Fuchs, 2019) The abstract space can refer to the “fantasy images, symbols which appear to arise from ‘something else.”(Lefebvre, 1991, p.311) In the lived space, human beings are making this space and living in this space, so it makes this space of “everyday activities” a subjective one. (Lefebvre, 1991) These two aspects can be seen as the different mindscapes within Montivilliers.

Mindscape can be defined as “the landscape as it exists in the mental realm, made of states of mind pertaining to the landscape.” (Jacobs et al. 2023, p.3) “The concept urges us to understand a site, whether a tourist destination or a heritage site, as both a mental and a physical entity – ‘mind’ for the former and ‘scape’ for the latter.” (Ronström, 2005, p.3-4) Mindscapes can come into different kinds such as the mindscapes build on the memories and the past as well as the mindscapes which are here and now activities. (Ronström, 2005) There are as many mindscapes as a place has different actors which leads to different gazes from the community and the visitors. (Ronström, 2005) Indeed, they are linked to the subjectivity of every human being as they relate to the different “associations”, “feelings”, “thoughts”, “intentions”, “meanings”, “impressions”, and “memories” that experience brings to someone. (Jacobs et al. 2023, p.3)

But even if they are at first subjective, the different cultures are shaping every human being through socialisation, information and communication influencing the different interpretations that the mindscapes can and will have. (Jacobs et al. 2023) So, mindscapes are to be understood within the
social aspect. (Jacobs et al. 2023) Mindscapes can live together and sometimes cooperate which can
be different for the different hours of the days, different days, ... (Ronström, 2005) Sometimes, the
mindscapes can also compete to have the same niche. (Ronström, 2005) It means that every
mindscapes leads to different production due to the various domains they are within. (Lowenthal, 1998)
Moreover, a heritage production well-developed with specific branding and marketing needs to be
implemented to understand the past better. “Never before have so many been so engaged with so
many different pasts.” (Lowenthal, 1998, p.3)

2.4 Heritage Production and Branding

Tourism sees heritage as a “production machine.” (Gravari-Barbas, 2012, p.1) Therefore, heritage is
interpreted as “a mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past.”
(Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998, p.149) Heritage production is the use of different “dead sites”,
“obsolete”, “the mistaken”, and “the outmoded” as raw material to build up a brand or a marketing
strategy for tourism and development purposes. (Ronström, 2013) In a sense, it is a tool to bring the
old, the unused, and the disturbance into something that can bring profit to the town. (Ronström,
2013)

So, heritage production has different effects. The ones responsible for it must decide on some specific
mindscapes existing in a specific space. Most of the time associated with the activity of memory
(Ronström, 2013) The different strategies which can be used are: Historization, Culturalization,
Aestheticization and Objectification. (Ronström, 2013) Historization is using the history of space in the
past so it can take a certain form in the present as well as in the future. (Ronström, 2013)
Culturalization is “when people start to reformulate in cultural terms who they are and what should
represent them as a collective.” (Ronström, 2005, p.13) Aestheticization can be seen as “a self-evident
good and an unquestionable value” in which “questions about style and taste are settled by
professional aesthetical expertise.” (Ronström, 2005, P.13) Objectification in the heritage production
context, is seen as bringing something abstract into a concrete form which will not be depicted in this
research. These different types of strategies can bring safety, authenticity and purity to a place due to
a homogenisation of the branding of the town. Heritage production transforms the former used into
something else according to the visitors, the tourists and the consumers' possibility of consuming
which brings “tourist flow” and “cultural capital” (Ronström, 2005 & 2013) But has the consumer
behaviour is never settled, the different strategies that a space can have needs to evolve through
time. Not only due to consumer behaviour but also to technological improvement.

So, the people responsible for creating the heritage production might need to create the narratives
and the visual images of the heritage which is why mindscapes are important as well as branding and
place marketing.

Branding a town, a tourist destination or a heritage site “refers to the practices of creating and
maintaining a brand to increase the destination’s attractiveness among tourists” which means that
branding is a “managerial procedure tailor-made for the packaging and marketing of products.”
(Dahlgaard-Park, 2015, p.44) The brand tries to bring all the mindscapes and subjective ideas of people
into a ubiquitous idea that every human being can have. (Dahlgaard-Park, 2015) But it means that a
multitude of people from different backgrounds must bring their contribution to this branding process and create a whole through good planning and strategy. (Dahlgaard-Park, 2015)

Place marketing is consequently ideal for the branding of heritage sites. Indeed, Place marketing “refers to the practices of drawing attention to and marketing specific places to increase their attractiveness and improve their image.” (Dahlgaard-Park, 2015, p.155) The place marketing is mostly based on a narrative or about the place regeneration. (Dahlgaard-Park, 2015) It can be very hard to put in place as it has diverse techniques, strategies, technologies, and communications which require diverse stakeholders. (Dahlgaard-Park, 2015)
2.5 Research delimitations

Even if the concepts are already framing the overall text, the research also needs to be framed.

The two main projects focused during the interviews and in this paper are the renovation of the abbey and the natural walk of La Sente des Rivières. Indeed, they are the two main ongoing in the town but they are also the two main heritage sites. Those heritages being at the centre of every local actor’s life and part of the new strategy is one of the reasons why I focused on those sites. The other main heritage sites are explained and described in the analysis part. They are here to understand the challenges and benefits that their renovation and production are having on the ongoing projects. Indeed, they are here to reflect on the different decisions that the town made in terms of heritage production and tourism planning.

A chronological approach will be implemented in the analysis part to have a more focused thinking about the different aspects, consequences, and issues that the town had to go through and what the heritage sites are now.

The three parts of the community were chosen due to their connection with the heritage production of the town. Other parts of the community such as shop owners, restaurants, and hotels were taken into consideration but are not going to be analysed in this paper due to being less connected to the overall subject of this paper.

Montivilliers’ community has boundaries with the town borders but the community have, in addition, people from smaller towns next to it and people from these towns come to Montivilliers every day to be part of associations, events,... This everyday perspective makes them part of the inhabitants of Montivilliers.

Other towns are mentioned during this thesis as they are towns with an extreme tourism approach that the interviewees mentioned. I didn’t want to have comparisons between Montivilliers and those towns as their specificities are much different, and it would not add to the research. But as the interviewees mentioned them, I thought it would be nice to have these towns to understand more the mindset of the different actors belonging to my case study.
3. Methodology and Materials

3.1 Research Approach

The Research first started with the will to work with my town. My town has a lot of history. It feels that in the past few years, the local community has wanted to improve tourism, heritage tourism and heritage production of our town for everyone. Analysing their way of using their heritage as well as producing it was therefore something I thought about in the first instance. Being in contact with the president of the twinning between Montivilliers and Nordhorn really helped me to get in touch with a variety of people in the town linked to the local government and the local community.

3.2 Research Design

The methodology is a result of primary and secondary data. The primary data is coming from interviews, fieldwork meetings and participant observation. This data was carried out in French for a better understanding of the participants. The secondary data are the articles used to construct the different concepts of the paper as well as to add a better insight into the findings part. Brochures and websites from the case study were analysed to go deeper into the research. It is a mix between French and English.

To start, I needed to contact the local government such as the mayor and the people related to the tourism and cultural planning of the town. Indeed, it is essential to know what they are and will be doing for the town in terms of cultural heritage tourism planning and how they approach sustainability in Montivilliers' management. It will also be important to understand their perspectives on the town’s heritage and cultural sites.

To this end, I started by doing unstructured interviews with the mayor delegate and the associations' leaders to establish strong contact already face to face as I was going back to Sweden with interviews mostly carried out online. It was relevant at this stage to gather information about the town’s history to understand its context before doing the full-on interviews so that I would be up to date with this knowledge even if I knew most of it already. These actors who have this kind of knowledge were helpful for the overall research. They even gave me history books which helped me greatly.

After gathering those essential data through this first step, I undertook three semi-structured interviews with the local government. First, I interviewed the person responsible for the tourism plan and the Abbaye conducted via Zoom on March 15th, 2023. Then, an interview with the current mayor and his deputy responsible for the cultural activities and events was conducted online through Teams on March 29th, 2023. I finished by interviewing the former mayor, later in the interviewing process, to understand the planning before the current municipality as the current one came to power when COVID happened. For this last interview, the former mayor invited me to his house, and we sat at his office on April 30th, 2023. Having the main persons representing the local government was essential for my research as they had insights into the ongoing projects and the overall town challenges and assets.
Tourism and cultural history go through associations and Montivilliers has many of them. This is why I conducted two other semi-structured interviews with two organisations linked with the history of the town. One was with the president of the twinning between Nordhorn and Montivilliers. It was a face-to-face interview with their president conducted in my childhood house on April 26th, 2023. The other association was "Montivilliers Hier Aujourd’hui et Demain" (MHAD) which was also a face-to-face interview with their president in Montivilliers’ social centre on April 26th, 2023.

With these interviews, I continued with fourteen semi-structured interviews. They were shorter than the local government and organizations which took around ten minutes to have the raw reactions and answers from them, to understand their perspectives and feelings by going to the infamous market. Every Thursday morning, a small market occurs in the city centre. I went there to gather information from the inhabitants on April 20th, 2023. The interviews were made next to the Abbaye to see the ongoing thoughts and processes of the inhabitants while being interviewed. For the rest of the inhabitants’ interviews, I went to one of the twinning association meetings on April 21st, 2023 in which various inhabitants were present. During this meeting, the inhabitants came up to me in small groups and interacted with each other which helped them formulate their ideas. (Alasuutari, 1995) When doing those small interviews, I was taking some notes for their answers as I felt it was more organic and closer to them.

To conclude, I thought it was wise to interview the person responsible for the tourism plan and the abbey again on August 2nd, 2023 to have more updates on the different aspects related to this thesis. It was a face-to-face meeting at the tourism office of the town. This interview was also semi-structured with questions I had from previous interviews and research. I took notes from this meeting.

This fieldwork allowed me to have a range of inhabitants who were living in the town for different years which allowed me to understand more the various answers from the different perspectives. Indeed, some know more about the town’s history and are more engaged in the town’s heritage rather than new inhabitants who are discovering.

The fieldwork is a mix of participant observation and small semi-structured interviews in which we asked the informants questions linked to our topic. (Alasuutari, 1995) When a fieldwork is lengthy, it helps to have different observations and cross the interview data from the several informants to find key information. (Alasuutari, 1995)

Semi-structured interviews were used to let the interviewee talk and have an open mind on the subject and let his feelings in without ever blocking the person. (Bryman, 2022) The questions within the semi-structured interviews varied a bit from the different instances of the community, but some stayed the same. Especially, the ones that referred to the interviewee’s own experience which can help to understand more their perspective and their ideas through some kind of storytelling. (Corbin and Strauss, 2008) This is why the local government and associations interviews were recorded. All the semi-structured interviews from the local government and the organisation were coded and analysed through thematization. For the inhabitants, the answers to the questions were put together to have a broader picture on this side.
3.3 Ethical Considerations

The interviewee knew about the different aspects of the study largely by explaining or emphasising different concepts or questions at the beginning and when the interviewee asked. It is part of the ethical norms (Alasuutari, 1995). Therefore, they were a bit prepared and not startled by the questions I might have. Even if some did. (Alasuutari, 1995).

During the interview process, the interviewee signed a document to approve the sharing and usage of their data for this specific research. Indeed, anonymity was mentioned during the different interviews. Not saying their names in the thesis but rather their roles was probably a better approach to understanding the different connections between the different actors of the thesis. Mentioning their names would not be relevant to the research.

Therefore, the authenticity of the participant must be taken into consideration. The interviews were all conducted in French. A work of translation was undertaken by me. Indeed, as I am French and from the community, it was better to get the essence of the person’s saying and understanding the different layers that came into play.

Being part of the same community helped me on understanding even more what the informants were referring to with special events, names of different places and even more sometimes not related to the study or the town itself (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Also, having my mother being one of the association’s presidents showed me the different aspects and challenges that the actors are dealing with but sometimes closed me from seeing the inhabitants who are not part of the local government or association and their perspectives. Different interviews from different inhabitants' angles were more than relevant to the research.
3.4. Limitations of the Study

When working on the thesis, I went through some limitations.

First, it was a time limitation. Indeed, this study was in a short time, and I would have needed a bit more time to do fieldwork and interviews with the different projects that were ongoing and not yet done. Also, the thesis is based on the interviews and the data which comes from it. Indeed, especially the inhabitants they were chosen randomly when people agreed to talk to me and give me some answers. If I had come another time or another day maybe the interviews and results would have been different as they are very much related to the personal experiences of the interviewee.

Being part of the community was a challenge, as I needed to not be biased by the different relations I already have with some of the actors. Knowing those people put me and them under subconscious pressure to share what they wanted to share. In that sense, I felt limited.

Interviewing people from the local government can be a challenge because politics can be involved. This is why the political aspect is not taken into consideration in the research because it would have a biased aspect to it.

Another aspect is that the different interviewees knew that I was an inhabitant of the town and would only give me their best side in a sense. They would talk to me about their challenges but not the real dysfunction inside the community or the different actors especially when talking to the local government because they knew I was from their community. But, on the inhabitants’ side, as they feel closer to me, they could tell me more about their positions and their ideas for the town but also mention some of the dysfunction.

During the research, I couldn’t get access to higher levels of tourism experts on the regional and national levels to understand their perspectives.
To understand the community's perceptions regarding their heritages, it is crucial to know the facts about the different heritages that the town has. It will help to understand their importance for the community through the history of those heritages.

Figure 1 will help the reader understand the location of the heritages explained throughout the research.

The town's historical background will be put together thanks to different sources such as the book on the history of Montivilliers by Gilbert Décultot and the tourist brochures resources entitled Montivilliers, cité des abbesses provided by the town itself.
4.1 Background History of the town of Montivilliers

Montivilliers, a small town in Normandy is one of the oldest towns in Upper Normandy\(^1\). (Coopération des métiers de la lecture, 2010) Montivilliers was a major hub during the medieval age, thanks to its fabrics renowned internationally, the market held on the main square and also for flowers and animal festivals. (Décultot, 1973) After the creation of Le Havre, the biggest city next to Montivilliers and the different wars happening in France, the town went through a drastic decline. After this decline, Montivilliers tried to develop other industries such as a gas factory, tanneries and cotton mills but it was still hard for the town to keep it up. (Décultot, 1973) After a while, the town was mostly known for its women abbey which is rare in Normandy, “the only one around is Valmont still in use today”\(^2\).

Normandy during the second world war was vastly touched and most of its cultural heritage was destroyed. Le Havre, for example, was destroyed and had to be rebuilt. But, Montivilliers survived through the Second World War and had the chance to preserve some of its cultural heritage. (Décultot, 1973)

Unfortunately, most of the heritage lost through the years in Montivilliers was mostly because of the loss of usage of built heritage itself which is why some works are happening now to keep this heritage alive. Heritage is what makes the town. Having a historical background on the case study is essential for the inhabitants and the research.

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\(^1\) Translated from French: Haute Normandie

\(^2\) “La plus proche est Valmont toujours en activité.” Responsible for the Cultural activities and events - March 29\(^{th}\) 2023- Zoom meeting
Figure 2. Map locating the current classified buildings in the commune of Montivilliers.
4.1.a The Abbey: The history of a Middle Age building throughout the years

During the 7th century, Saint Philibert the Abbe of Jumièges, decided to establish a women’s Monastery called Monasterii Villare translated in English to “The Monastery estate”. This Monastery gave its name to the town and will forever link the abbey to the whole town. A few years after the establishment of the abbey, the Vikings demolished it.

Later rebuilt around 1035-1065 AD, the abbey was granted “the Charter of Exemption” by the Duke of Normandy in 1035. This Charter gave the Abbess the authority over multiple villages, chapels and even one of the most profitable ports which helped with the reconstruction of the different buildings of the abbey and helped later in the prosperity of the town throughout the years which gave Montivilliers and the abbey’s prestige.

After the French Revolution, the abbey stopped its monastic life leading to the nuns’ departure and the beginning of its integration process in the town.

In 1992, the entire set of monastic buildings was classified as Historical Monument, a French national label on cultural heritage, during its restoration. Whereas the church connected to the abbey became a Historical Monument in 1862.

Between 1997 and 2000, the local government rearranged the abbey to become the centre of the cultural and tourism life of the town. A variety of cultural activities, guided tours and temporary exhibitions were put together to welcome visitors. This is when Montivilliers really started to have some tourism and cultural plans as well as heritage production.

But what is the state of the abbey now? How is the abbey seen and perceived now after 25 years of evolution?
4.1.b La Sente des Rivières: a cultural natural walk

![Figure 4. Natural walk of La Sente des Rivières nowadays](image1)

*Figure 4. Natural walk of La Sente des Rivières nowadays*

![Figure 5. Natural walk of La Sente des Rivières Old Postcard, updated](image2)

*Figure 5. Natural walk of La Sente des Rivières Old Postcard, updated*

La Sente des Rivières is a natural walk located on the east part of the town. Linked to the history of the town thanks to the river La Lézarde. Walking by the river, makes you go back in time when the textile industry was still active and when the different watermills used to make flour were still in activity. (abbaye-montivilliers.fr/promenades, 2023) This walk is considered has a cultural heritage as visitors came from all around the region during the beginning of the 1900s. There was a guinguette which can be called in English “an open-air dance restaurant” and was known by the inhabitants³. When Montivilliers was a resort centre for Le Havre inhabitants, this path was and is taken frequently by people, especially on Sundays. It became “a place where it is nice to have a walk, do some sports”⁴ and is renowned among the community as well as inhabitants from nearby towns. In 2018, the local government bought the piece of land next to it to create a new space. The walk became unsafe due to some suspicious activities during the night but still, people would come there thanks to the flora and fauna the space has to offer. This is why, the town decided to reimagine the place with construction work happening now.

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³ “Il y avait une guinguette au début des années 90.” President of MHAD- April 26th 2023- Montivilliers

⁴ “Un lieu d’activité, de plaisir et de détente.”- President of MHAD- April 26th 2023- Montivilliers
4.1.c Other tangible heritages

Even if the two main ongoing projects are more than relevant for the future of tourism planning and heritage production within the town, some other heritages were also redefined or not through the years. Here are some of the main tangible heritages relevant to add to this paper. These different heritages are put in chronological order of when they were first built.

**Figure 6. Hotel Dieu, cultural centre nowadays**

The Hotel Dieu was founded by the head Abbess between 1237-1255. (Décultot, 1973) It was a hospital during the Medieval Age to heal the poorest people in society. This place was destroyed and then rebuilt in 1644. It helped poor and disabled people in the town until 1924. (abbaye-montivilliers.fr/lhotel-dieu, 2023) In 1991, after the Second World War, it was refurbished and repurposed as a new place of culture, a Maison des Arts, "Art centre" in English. (Fidelin, D. ed, 2015)

**Figure 7. Les Hallettes, view from Henry Lemonnier street**

As Montivilliers was an important hub during the Middle Ages, the creation of spaces to sell different goods such as fabrics had to be built called The Hallettes.

They were first constructed around the end of the Middle Ages. It evolved throughout the years as the last renovation dates back to the 19th century. Then, their complete renovation started in 2020 and finished in 2021 including the square next to it. (abbaye-montivilliers.fr/les-hallettes, 2023)
The Aître of Brisgaret is a cemetery. The word Aître in Latin means atrium: the cemetery. (Ville de Montivilliers, 2023) It was built when the town needed more space outside of the city centre. (MTIVI-Ville de Montivilliers, 2020) For the name Brisgaret, “Brise-Jarret” which would be explained literally in English to “Breaking Shank”⁵ because to go to this cemetery you “had to walk up a hill”⁶ and it would really hurt your legs. It is one of the rarest medieval cemeteries in France with still its original vocation. (abbaye-montivilliers.fr/laitre-de-brisgaret, 2023) At the beginning of the 16th century, the main gallery was made, principally used as an ossuary (Ville de Montivilliers, 2023) The most intricate details are on the wooden pillars where the different carved designs can be seen. It represents Arma Christi and some more deathly representations. (Ville de Montivilliers, 2023) In 1602, An altarpiece was added to the chapel representing Lazarus. Lastly, a Gothic cross from the 16th century was put in place in the cemetery in memory of the deceased who was in this mass grave. It became a Historical Monument in 1886 and restored in 2013. (Ville de Montivilliers, 2023)

⁵ “Brisgaret qui veut dire Brise-Jarret.” - Former Mayor - April 30th 2023 - Montivilliers

⁶ “C’est pour ça que la côte qui monte.” - Former Mayor - April 30th 2023 - Montivilliers
The fountain was built between 1539 and 1549. Its purpose was to bring a large amount of water to
the inhabitants and be the main hub of the town at the city centre close to the abbey. The water from
La Lézarde could not be drank as it was polluted with the different products used by the draperies and
tanneries industry. (Ville de Montivilliers, 2023)
The protestant temple is one of a kind in France, built as a house to not attract attention in 1787 with a rectilinear façade rounded at both ends. This temple became a Historical Monument in 1977. (abbaye-montivilliers.fr/le-temple-protestant, 2023)/ (Ville de Montivilliers, 2023).

In 1850, the current mayor donated books from his own collection to the town. (Coopération des métiers de la lecture, 2010). In 1880, the Montivilliers’ library was finally open to everyone in another place than the one it is now. (Coopération des métiers de la lecture, 2010) The local library was installed where it is still today in 1994 inside the abbey precisely where the main abbess was living. (m-montivilliers.fr, 2023) This library is called the Condorcet Library.
4.1.d Intangible Heritage

Montivilliers has different intangible heritages which is something that is considered a lot by the community such as the different stories passed down to different generations, traditions in which some disappeared, special games created in town or even the twinning between Nordhorn in Germany and Montivilliers. The town has special events that are reputed now: the fireworks on July 13th, which is the French national celebration, the *Christmas market* which is renowned in the region happening at the beginning of December, *the town flea market* and even the official *Thursday market* happening since the medieval period where people get their food and all of the sorts of things. Also, *Music Day* occurs in France every June 21st. Concerts are happening all around France. Montivilliers celebrates it which can be seen as a broader heritage at a national level. The former municipality realised that “the inhabitants were not really participating in the town’s life and one thing that would make them come would be to bring famous French singers on the stage to make all the inhabitants come during this event”\(^7\). Now, the music with this new municipality is a bit different with “asking the participation of the inhabitants directly to create the show.”\(^8\) Those are two different ways to make the inhabitants participate in the cultural life of the town. These events are part of the cultural heritage of the town in which people from the community go and participate but also visitors who want to discover the town from another angle. Now, new events are being put together and will become or are becoming intangible heritage celebrations such as the *Monti Marché d’été* (Summer Market) and *Micro Folie* an event linked to the different ways of learning.

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\(^7\) “Ils ne participent pas beaucoup, moi je l’avais constaté. On faisait la fête de la musique (…) il y avait beaucoup de montivillons (…) puis on a (Les artistes) à Montivilliers donc ils dérangent.” - Former Mayor - April 30th 2023 - Montivilliers

\(^8\) “On demande à des Montivillons si il y a des talents pour animer la fête de la musique.” - Former Mayor - April 30th 2023 - Montivilliers
4.2. Presentation of Montivilliers’ community

To have proper tourism planning and heritage production, the community is more than needed which is why community-based tourism must be taken into consideration to create sustainable tourism and heritage production for the town heritage sites.

The community is seen as the “geographical area that is recognizable by a set of attributes tied to its physical location or appearance, such as natural boundaries, an acknowledged history, demographic patterns, or the presence and work within it of particular industries or organizations.” (Moayerian et al. 2022, p.2). This aspect of the community is mostly the tangible side of the definition. The social definition can also be put forward: “the members of a community have an understanding of shared elements of identity and norms, and they interact with each other based on certain kinds of norms and behavioural models in reciprocal ways” . (Saarinen, 2019, p.211)

In a general aspect, it is hard to grasp the community as it is not the same for each destination and not as Saarinen says “homogenous”. (Saarinen, 2019) But, in the tourism context, the town reflects on the community’s identity with “various cultural, social, economic and political imperatives and identities” but they are all required for the creation of this space. (Dahlgaard-Park, 2005, p.44). Indeed, as Henri Lefebvre pointed out, when there is a conceived space, some dominant groups can take over the space for themselves. (Lefebvre, 1998) But in a more socialist perspective, the conceived space is regarded as an “appropriated space by human interest” with all “the information that plan space benefits not dominant class, but all those living in a space.” (Fuchs, 2017, p.138) Meaning that there can be participation between the different parts of the community through the design and planning of their space and in that case their heritage. So, the different community components looked through in this thesis are the local government, the associations and the inhabitants.

According to the local government, they have different types of participation in the heritage production of the town. There are two types of participation: active and passive.

The active part can be the local government and the different employees of the town who are promoting and creating a tourism plan as well as a more in-depth heritage production. On the associations’ side, it might be the president of associations9 and some members of these said associations who are giving 100% of themselves into creating activities or events to bring the community together and strengthen their knowledge of the town but also their knowledge about each other’s part in the community. It can also be the inhabitants who are taking part in the associations to learn more about their heritage or other “inhabitants who are coming to events regularly following the different guided tours”10 and the cultural program created by the local government.

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9 “Les présidents d’associations sont des bons ambassadeurs.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting

10 “Les gens qui nous suivent pendant les visites et impliqués dans la vie municipale ou associative.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting
On the passive side, this is principally the inhabitants. Some of the inhabitants have no link with heritage whatsoever and have other jobs and activities leading to an irrelevance for them to participate in anything related to culture. It might also be a lack of knowledge related to cultural heritage or of the events occurring in town. But it can also be the unavailability due to overwhelming jobs. Other passive aspects are the inhabitants who are just coming for one event which is mostly the most popular or traditional one without any interactions or direct participation in it.

The passive side is therefore something that the community must consider while creating their tourism plan and heritage production to not take away the only thing that could make the passive side more participative in the events.

For further understanding, the inhabitants will sometimes be referred to as montivilions as it is the name of the people living there.
4.2.a Local Government

The local government of a town needs to be involved on a local level to provide a supportive framework, funding and destination management strategies. (Page and Connell, 2020).

The local government is an important part to take into consideration for the development of tourism planning through place marketing and heritage management. Sometimes, it can be seen as the “dominant group” as they have a certain power in terms of decision-making and investment in projects. The local government’s involvement in the heritage production of the town and the ties with the other parts of the community are more than relevant in understanding the overall picture.

In France, the local government of a town is composed of a mayor who has the lead responsibilities and his deputies responsible for different themes/aspects of the town more in-depth. In bigger towns, a deputy is responsible for tourism. In Montivilliers, it is not the case as tourism is a new aspect in development, and they have someone who is not part directly of the local government but is employed by them.

In this study, I talked to the current Mayor and his deputy responsible for the cultural life of the town to understand the ongoing heritage production and their perspectives. It was also important for me, as the current mayor came into position in 2020 during COVID-19 time, that the former Mayor was interviewed to understand the state of Montivilliers before COVID-19 with the former mayor as well as the future projects with the current mayor to have a broader picture of the situation.

In this part, I interviewed one person who was not elected so with no political ties. He is the person responsible for the tourism planning and the abbey. He is paid by the local government for this job. His knowledge of the tourism development of the town from 2000 when the abbey was first renovated until now is uncanny.

In a sense, the local government are also part of the inhabitants as they are living in the town but have a higher responsibility and decision-making over other inhabitants as well as the highest participation in heritage production. They feel that “when you are a town agent linked to tourism, you are truthfully its best ambassador”\(^\text{11}\). Indeed, some are inhabitants of Montivilliers since they were “13 years old”\(^\text{12}\).

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\(^{11}\) “Quand vous êtes agent municipal de votre commune dans la partie tourisme, vous êtes le meilleur ambassadeur en vérité.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15\(^\text{th}\) 2023 - Zoom meeting

\(^{12}\) “Je suis montivillions depuis l’âge de 13 ans.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15\(^\text{th}\) 2023 - Zoom meeting
4.2.b Associations

Non-governmental organizations may also play a positive role in community-based tourism development as it is a key stakeholder that can help build local tourism potential through collaboration. (Page and Connell, 2020).

Associations are a big part of Montivilliers. Indeed, for a small town of 16000 inhabitants, there are more than 130. (Ville de montivilliers, 2023) According to one of the inhabitants during the interview process, “¼ are cultural associations and the rest are mostly sports clubs”\(^{13}\). They are also a link between the inhabitants and the local government. Organisations are quite separate between the local government and the inhabitants as I feel that they are part of both. “The inhabitants of Montivilliers are used to working with the associations because there are so many and the link between these two parts of the community. Indeed, Montivilliers has “Associations are doing a lot of events and bring the town to life”\(^{14}\). Those associations are “the ones who are grasping most of the inhabitants into the different activities that the local government and the town are doing”\(^{15}\).

The associations in Montivilliers are not only composed of montivillians indeed, as the president of MHAD pointed out: “there are some montivillians who are regulars but also people from outside not only montivillians”\(^{16}\). Probably because people from outside are from very small towns next to Montivilliers where they go every day. Also, some people love history and this organisation has a lot of resources to fulfil this achievement. Interviewing two major presidents of cultural associations in which cultural heritage and heritage is something that runs deep into their DNA, was evident to me.

\(^{13}\) “1/4 des associations sont culturels et le restent sont sportives.” - Inhabitant - April 21\(^{st}\) 2023 - Association meeting

\(^{14}\) “On a une vie associative qui est extrêmement riche à Montivilliers.” - Responsible for Cultural activities and events - March 29\(^{th}\) 2023 - Zoom meeting

\(^{15}\) “Elles permettent de capter un certain nombre de montivillians et de les associer d’une manière ou d’une autre aux activités de la ville.” - Responsible for Cultural activities and events - March 29\(^{th}\) 2023 - Zoom meeting

\(^{16}\) “Des montivillians qui sont des fidèles mais aussi des extérieurs car ce n’est pas purement montivillians.” - President of MHAD - April 26\(^{th}\) 2023 - Montivilliers
MHAD, Montivilliers Hier Aujourd’hui et Demain\textsuperscript{17} is aimed to “promote the town, its surroundings and the region by helping their historical research”\textsuperscript{18} created in 1987\textsuperscript{19}. To do so, they are making exhibitions\textsuperscript{20}, books, conferences\textsuperscript{21} and are also part of the guiding within Montivilliers during the Heritage Days\textsuperscript{22}. During those days in France, heritage places all around France are opened and/or are making a special event to have more people able to discover the different heritage. They are trying to be represented at every cultural event the town can do\textsuperscript{23}. The MHAD president was interviewed and further details on the history and heritage of the town was developed and seen. It was also important for me to get in contact with MHAD has they were managing the tourism plan at the beginning and were the only association doing guided tours and tourism related activities before the first renovation of the abbey. Even one of their members “was the association guide and was therefore the town guide.”\textsuperscript{24} It was a person very important for the development of the tourism in Montivilliers.

The Twinning between Montivilliers and Nordhorn is one of the emblematic associations in Montivilliers. A twinning is when two towns come together to share their culture and help each other in so many ways. This twinning started when “an inhabitant of the town went to see his German friend in Nordhorn then they wanted to create one of the first twinning between France and Germany after the Second World War”\textsuperscript{25}. Indeed, it is one of the first twinning in Normandy between France and Germany after the Second World War. This association is mostly known for its creation of the annual Christmas Market which is - according to a lot of the inhabitants - one of the prettiest and nicest in the region. Their aim is also to promote the German language and the union between the two countries by doing journeys to and from Nordhorn to make the inhabitants of the two towns discover each other’s culture and way of life. The twinning association president was interviewed to understand the ties between this organisation and the rest of the community.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{17} Translated into “Montivilliers Yesterday Today and Tomorrow”
\textsuperscript{18} “Mettre en valeur et promouvoir le patrimoine de Montivilliers en facilitant les recherches historiques.” - President of MHAD - April 26\textsuperscript{th} 2023 - Montivilliers
\textsuperscript{19} “crée en 1987.” - President of MHAD – April 26\textsuperscript{th} 2023 - Montivilliers
\textsuperscript{20} “Exposer une expo.” - President of MHAD - April 26\textsuperscript{th} 2023 - Montivilliers
\textsuperscript{21} “Trois - quatre conférences par ans.” - President of MHAD - April 26\textsuperscript{th} 2023 - Montivilliers
\textsuperscript{22} “Participation aux journées du patrimoine.” - President of MHAD - April 26\textsuperscript{th} 2023 - Montivilliers
\textsuperscript{23} Toutes les activités liées au patrimoine.” - President of MHAD - April 26\textsuperscript{th} 2023 - Montivilliers
\textsuperscript{24} “Lucien Lefebvre, qui était le guide de l’association et d’aucoup le guide de la ville.” - Responsible for the tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15\textsuperscript{th} 2023 - Zoom Meeting
\textsuperscript{25} “l’histoire d’un jeune étudiant français qui est parti voir des amis dans la région de la Basse Saxe et à Nordhorn et ils se sont dit pourquoi pas justement créer un jumelage.” - President of the Twinning -- April 26\textsuperscript{th} 2023 - Montivilliers
\end{flushleft}
As a twinning, “this association has stronger ties with the local government” 26. Learning also on one of the oldest twinning between two towns was interesting to go through for the heritage production perspective.

26 “Un lien un peu plus fort que d’autres associations avec la municipalité.”- President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers
4.2.c Inhabitants

As Henri Lefebvre mentions, a space in its representational state is a lived space. Indeed, space is lived through everyday life activities which passively experience the space as they know it. (Lefebvre, 1998)

The inhabitants are the essence of the community. They are every person who lives or belongs to the space of Montivilliers through space boundaries or emotional boundaries. In this case study, people who are also living in other smaller towns next to Montivilliers who have personal links to the town through family and their past are also part of the inhabitants’ group as they are still engaging with the town through associations or with their participation in different cultural activities.

Indeed, the inhabitants are “vectors of communications and ambassadors of their territory”27. Here, territory can refer to different levels of territory which could be on the town, urban community, region or even national scale. They are from different social and economical backgrounds but are tied to Montivilliers through their identity. Each part of the inhabitants is like the community: diverse. Therefore, it can be arduous in some situations to bring them into the heritage production planning or in different cultural activities. Consequently, heritage production and branding must have a space within them for the inhabitants. As the inhabitants do not work and fully understand the tourism planning and heritage process because they are not from this branch, they can have another perspective on the challenges and issues the town might have. They can bring new and innovative ways to resolve some issues. Workshops with the inhabitants for different heritage projects need to be implemented more even if the local government who are mostly leading it are taking care of the decisions at the end.

In this research, fourteen inhabitants in different places and contexts were interviewed to have a broader aspect of the different persons that are part of it. I was trying to have various inhabitants living in Montivilliers for different amounts of years to understand their ties with the other parts of the community.

27 “vecteurs de communication et ils sont des ambassadeurs de leur territoire.” - Responsible for the tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting
In 2019, France was the first tourist destination in the world with the number of foreigners coming to visit this country. (diplomatie.gouv, 2021). Indeed, tourism is one of the main sectors of the French economy representing 8% of the French GDP while producing more than two million jobs (diplomatie.gouv, 2021). Having a national strategy as well as having local ones is essential.

After COVID, France has lost a lot of its tourism activity. Therefore, a strategy was put into place by the French government and the different actors of the tourism sector called Destination France to take into consideration the distinct players of this economic sector together and try to deal with the new technologies and ways to do tourism with more and more competitions from the neighbourhood countries. (diplomatie.gouv, 2021). Within the French Government, there are several ministers for different subjects within the society.

One of France’s main objectives as Barbara Pompili, the 2021 Ecological Transition Minister, said is to have sustainability at the centre of the tourism industry. (diplomatie.gouv, 2021) But also to make France the first tourist destination for natural and cultural heritage. (diplomatie.gouv, 2021). The 2021 Culture Minister, Roselyne Bachelot mentioned that France is well known for its culture. She emphasized that she wanted to develop the territories with cultural actions and have more inhabitants participating in culture at every level. (diplomatie.gouv, 2021). Destination France has five focuses in which cultural heritage and sustainability are one of them. (diplomatie.gouv, 2021).
So with those considerations from the French government, “The Minister of Tourism is giving a guideline to the different regions”\textsuperscript{28}. Then, “the different regions create their own action model which leading to a project call to the different communes and towns around the region”\textsuperscript{29}.

In July 2023, a meeting with those responsible for tourism planning in their own towns happened. The person for Montivilliers was there and explained to me the main upcoming. This meeting was organised by the Normandie Region to explain their take on the different guidelines given by the Minister of Tourism. They were mostly focusing on Heritage. The objectives are to “diagnose and analyse heritage sites that must be redone before restoring them”\textsuperscript{30}; “Make no difference between the protected and unprotected heritages in the region”\textsuperscript{31}; “Public and private heritages must be considered on the same level”\textsuperscript{32}; “Take into account the importance in safeguarding the religious heritage and the parks and gardens”\textsuperscript{33} and to be very “focused on the significance of the safety of the monuments and building heritage from fires and theft”\textsuperscript{34}. 

\textsuperscript{28} “Il y a des directives du ministère du tourisme qui donne un plan pour chaque région.” - Responsible for the tourism plan and the Abbaye - June 2\textsuperscript{nd} 2023 - Montivilliers

\textsuperscript{29} “A partir de là, les régions créer des fiches d’actions et des appels aux projets liés.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - June 2\textsuperscript{nd} 2023 - Montivilliers

\textsuperscript{30} “Diagnostique et analyse du patrimoine avant restauration.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - June 2\textsuperscript{nd} 2023 - Montivilliers

\textsuperscript{31} “Faire aucune différence entre les bâtiments protégée ou non.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - June 2\textsuperscript{nd} 2023 - Montivilliers

\textsuperscript{32} “Pas de différences entre le patrimoine public ou privée.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - June 2\textsuperscript{nd} 2023 - Montivilliers

\textsuperscript{33} “Prendre en considération l’importance de sauvegardé le patrimoine cultuel, parcs et jardins.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - June 2\textsuperscript{nd} 2023 - Montivilliers

\textsuperscript{34} “Importance de la sécurité et des vols des lieux de patrimoine.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - June 2\textsuperscript{nd} 2023 - Montivilliers
On the national level, a strategy is in place. But, how do you implement it on a regional level? Montivilliers is part of an “Urban Community” (CU): several different communes, connected geographically, put together to have a better strategy and communication between them. Indeed, before 2000, “there was no link between the towns of the CU, they were not promoting each other”35.

On the tourism level, this CU has an official DMO which takes care of the strategy related to these communes called Le Havre, Etretat, Normandie Tourisme. Le Havre and Etretat are the two main tourism destinations of the CU and are the main contributors to this organisation. So, the CU is the link between the region and the towns. Indeed, when the region is giving the call for projects, the towns are applying for the projects which can give them subsidies and the region committee will validate or not their application36. So, in this case study, the CU is at another level as it is helping the Normandie region to give and spread the subsidies to the various towns of the CU.

In the earliest strategies from 2018-2022, tourism planning and cultural heritage needed to be taken more into account in the CU to have better attractivity. It is also stated that it must have a common way to put even more value on the different heritages using art, fun and celebrations. (Le Havre Normandie Tourisme et Culture, 2018) Heritage will also have value through the reinforcement of the different ways of communication in a place (signs, guides and learning spaces for children) with the use of new technologies. (Le Havre Normandie Tourisme et Culture, 2018) As one of the other statements, the use of temporary exhibitions on the history of a certain place can bring attraction to different types of tourists. It is something the CU and the towns need to develop. (Le Havre Normandie Tourisme et Culture, 2018)

35 “Il n’y avait aucune intercommunalité.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting

36 “Après l’appel aux projets, les différentes villes s’inscrivent dans les projets et un comité valide ou pas leurs candidatures.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - June 2nd 2023 - Montivilliers
At the moment, a new strategy at the regional level will be settled from 2023-2028 with the CU taking part in it. It is one of the main objectives that the CU has to ally with their own strategies. (pronormandietourisme.fr, 2023) One of the other objectives is to have more sustainability by sharing the profits linked to tourism with the inhabitants by redesigning the flow of tourists through time and space while bringing more youth to the different parts of the region. (pronormandietourisme.fr, 2023)

To avoid over tourism, the town needs “to have a plan with towns in the countryside”\(^{37}\) to deal with the tourist flux mostly from Le Havre and Etretat.

The CU in terms of tourism development layout are “even more working on the build heritage but they are also working on the implementation of green tourism.”\(^{38}\) But different communes linked to the CU have to also “react”\(^{39}\) to it and work also on their side. “With climate change, Normandy is becoming a place where there are less heat and therefore can bring more tourists in the next few years.”\(^{40}\)

The CU is trying to develop its new strategy by doing workshops with the different towns’ tourism planning representatives belonging to the CU. “The CU did workshops on the assessment of the last few years and the different things happening now for them but also workshops on the future of tourism in the region. It was very much focusing on the long-term plan which is something that sustainability is thriving.”\(^{41}\). The CU has “a lot of expectations from Montivilliers because it is part of the Normandy Abbey Network and there are other Abbeys around but not like the one in Montivilliers.”\(^{42}\)

With the different levels of the strategies explained, Montivilliers must follow most of the different strategies at their own scale. As we speak, the tourism planning of Montivilliers is in the making with the projects which are part of the redefinition of the town to bring more tourists to see the heritages the town has to offer. The two main ongoing projects are the abbey renovation as well as the redefinition of La Sente des Rivières (Figure 1). These projects will be accompanied by the other tangible and intangible heritage in the finding part.

37 “valoriser l’arrière-pays” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Montivilliers

38 “Plus encore sur le patrimoine bâti, mais ils sont en train de travailler également sur la mise en tourisme vert.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Montivilliers

39 “réaction”- Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Montivilliers

40 “le réchauffement climatique, les canicules vont faire devenir la Normandie comme région touristique.” - Current Mayor - March 29th 2023 - Zoom meeting

41 “Ateliers touristiques sur le bilan des dernières années et un autre atelier sur le tourisme dans les années à venir.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - June 2nd 2023 - Montivilliers

42 “Il y a une attente parce que l’abbaye fait partie du réseau des abbayes Normandes, il y en a quelques unes dans les parages c’est vrai qu’on à cette carte à jouer.” - Current Mayor - March 29th 2023 - Zoom Meeting
6. Analytical Framework

I really wanted to make this research close to people, personal and organic. In the early stages, I did not have an analytical framework. I wanted to let my interviewees lead me in their direction, to comprehend what they think, feel and understand about sustainable tourism, community and heritage.

From this first stage, other concepts were applied and theories from Ronström’s articles were put to light while understanding the different steps that bring Montivilliers into its current state.

To understand those different steps, the findings part will go through the Montivilliers' heritage production chronologically by explaining the community implications and perspectives while emphasising the consequences and effects of heritage production.

The quotation from the interviews has been translated into English by me. Those quotations will have a footnote with the accurate quotation in French so people can read the exact quote from Montivilliers' community.
7. Major Findings of the different heritage production done and perceived by the community

Montivilliers is a commune of 16000 inhabitants in which a lot of its cultural heritage was either transformed or taken away throughout the years.

Indeed, the town's fortifications were not destroyed. They were just left behind because it was too hard for the community to preserve it. Therefore, “a lot of the inhabitants took the fortifications’ stones and built their houses”43, thus considered as one of the first heritage production with a repurpose of the raw material of the town.

Some of the heritages explained above have been rethought and remade by the inhabitants to deal with the effects of time and climate change. Indeed, “the Wheat Hall located at the centre of the town used for decades for talks, debate and a marketplace, was destroyed due to the local government who didn’t know what to do with it anymore as the town developed and needed more of a village hall for events and parties”44.

Even though the different wars France went through, the town still managed to keep a great amount of its tangible and intangible heritage. Indeed, Figure 2 shows that Montivilliers has different tangible heritages still being used or preserved by the inhabitants for various reasons that can go from day-to-day use or tourism and educational purposes.

So, how does the town throughout centuries manage to implement tourism while preserving and taking care of its heritage?

43 “Les fortifications ont été réutiliser pour construire les maisons de la ville.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - June 2nd 2023 - Montivilliers

44 “La Halle aux blés a servi pendant des années mais est devenu désuète et a donc été détruite et remplacer par la salle des fêtes.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - June 2nd 2023 - Montivilliers
7.1. Heritage Production before the 1st Abbey Renovation

In 2000, with the first renovation of the Montivilliers’ abbey created its first tourism plan. “It was mostly on the building itself as well as the branding and marketing of the town with tourism information and a new website.” But going back in time, some of the heritages went through a heritage production process a “cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998, p.149). Those heritages have been renovated and refurbished according to the different purposes and meanings that each possesses.

Indeed, after the Second World War, the Hotel Dieu (Figure 6) was refurbished and redefined as an art centre for the town. A place where music, drama and other arts are performed to encourage the learning and the knowledge of the residents and occasionally visitors. (abbaye-montivilliers.fr/lhotel-dieu, 2023) Thus, with this new place, the community will be more inclined to learn the story of their town. Because, when culture is being learned, it “can produce an individual conscientization and empowerment” from themselves. (Moayerian et al. 2022, p.3) This will be added to their already existing knowledge of the different spaces that they are living in. And therefore, will help with the participation because they need resources and skills to participate in tourism and heritage decisions. (Beeton, 2005) But not all the residents are going to this place and taking art and culture classes which is why actions and places linked to culture need to be more developed.

One other building refurbished and redefined through heritage production before the tourism plan was the local library called the Condorcet Library (Figure 12). Installed where it is still today in 1994 inside the abbey more precisely where the main Abbess had her living quarters. (m-montivilliers.fr, 2023) This site was chosen by the local government for the space that this part has to offer, to put all the books and archives. The town repurposed this space to create another new cultural centre to bring the inhabitants to the city centre and have them reappropriate the space. The library possesses artifacts which are part of Montivilliers' history such as old maps of the town, documents signed by the king... (Coopération des métiers de la lecture, 2010). Not only has the library redefined a side of the abbey but the nuns' gothic refectory has been transformed into an exhibition hall in which temporary exhibitions and sometimes workshops are happening.

The abbey went through its first adaptive reuse with the library. “Adaptive re-use more specifically refers to the process of giving a building a new existence” (Velthuis and Spennemann, 2007, p.45). But, with this new existence, the community needed to feel a familiar atmosphere and have something that is in the continuity of the place. (Latham, 2000) In the inhabitants’ conscience, the abbey was already a place where culture and books were at their peak. In the Middle Ages, only people from an elite background or the Church could read and have access to culture meaning that it is common knowledge within the community. After the French Revolution, the abbey buildings were turned into places of public education due to the new values that France wanted to convey. Indeed, liberty,
equality and fraternity had to be shared for the “education of future generations and the development of culture”. (Coomans, 2018, p.147). So, many abbey buildings left behind were transformed into libraries around France and the town’s library was placed here.

This library is not only for the inhabitants but also for the tourists and people living in towns around Montivilliers. Indeed, while asking the different people working there, most of them were not from Montivilliers as well as people visiting the library, especially during Holidays. The Condorcet library is therefore a place where everyone is welcome to learn about the town’s history and to learn even more through the different sections that the library has to offer.

After the library's adaptive re-use, one of the main intangible heritages of the town Christmas Market was created in 1997 by the president of the twinning committee of Nordhorn and Montivilliers at that time. “She installed a small tent in the city centre and started by selling German products from Nordhorn to the montivillions”47 and then “the inhabitants being so enthusiastic about it, kept on coming and bringing even more people”48. With events like this happening on weekends, it brings even more people and creates density to a place, as well as creating another experience which brings people to another time, place, and world. (Ronström, 2015) For example, the square by the abbey where the Christmas Market is happening is a parking lot during day-to-day life when it is not needed as “the town being a medieval town, there are some issues with parking spots”49. This is very convenient for the inhabitant’s everyday life, but “it is sometimes dismal because nothing happens there”50 but during events such as the Thursday's market and the Christmas market this square is alive again. “Some say that it is the biggest and the most beautiful Christmas market of the region”51. The twinning committee is still trying to keep this heritage that was passed down by one of their former presidents. They are still using the Christmas Market cabins and are trying to have the most traditional German food to share the other culture with which the town is twinned. But they are also trying to “reuse every year the same materials to but more sustainable but also to gain some money”52. This

47 “Elle avait fait monter une petite tente ou elle proposait des choses qu’elle avait ramenées d’Allemagne.”- President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

48 “Vu l’engouement et les retours, il y a eu des habitants de Montivilliers et ça s’est agrandi.”- President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

49 “La place de l’Abbaye devient un parking quand pas d’évènement car il y a un manque de place à Montivilliers et aussi parceque la ville est une ville médiévale avec des petites rues.”- President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

50 “Un endroit que je trouve lugubre c’est cette place ou il n’y a jamais personnes. Ce n’est pas un lieu de vie mais le marché lui redonne vie mais pas tout le temps.” - President of MHAD - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

51 “L’un des plus gros et des plus beau de la région.”- President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

52 “D’un point de vue financier nous sommes obligé de faire un petit peu de durable et nous réutilisons souvent le même matériel.”- President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers
association are also very committed in “trying to make the local shops participate in this event”\textsuperscript{53}. “Sometimes it can be a challenge due to the prices being higher”\textsuperscript{54}, but it is something that they will keep on doing. Most people interviewed explained that this event was one of their favourites.

The \textit{Christmas Market} is a culturalization point. Culturalization is “when people start to reformulate in cultural terms who they are and what should represent them as a collective” (Ronström, 2013, p.13). So, in a sense, the twinning created something from another region/country and made it their own. Indeed, it made sense to do so as the town is twinned to a town in Germany where Christmas Markets are famous. It helped create a place with a familiar environment with fun activities while keeping the traditional aspect.

Even if earlier in the past, heritage production has already been implemented through the fortifications or the Wheat Hall. These new heritage productions through these tangible and intangible heritages really helped in prepping and creating the first branding and specific spaces that could be useful for the creation of the first strategy. It is also the premise of the heritage evolving aspect to live through their time through adaptive re-use and culturalization. Culture is an important aspect of our society that the town and France are taking very seriously. France is considered a country with a culture which entails art, literature, music, and heritage which is something that every town in France should offer. Montivilliers in having those heritages linked to culture and arts helped in having inhabitants more inclined to take part in the planning and preservation of those said heritages. Indeed, having the cultural life already taking over the spaces, will help in the later implementation of cultural and sustainable tourism for the town. The first renovation of the abbey can therefore begin.

\textsuperscript{53} “Toujours travailler aussi avec les gens de la localité, de la commune.” - President of the Twinning - April 26\textsuperscript{th} 2023 - Montivilliers

\textsuperscript{54} “malgré un coût forcément un peu plus important.” - President of the Twinning - April 26\textsuperscript{th} 2023 - Montivilliers
7.2 First tourism strategy and first main abbey renovation

25 years ago, the mayor at the time wanted to bring back “more attractiveness to the city centre for the shops, restaurants”\(^{55}\) ... by having a cultural identity which would bring visitors inside the abbey and around town because before Montivilliers was “a village full of small shops with local industries and handicraft.”\(^{56}\) But, the town was not seen as that anymore. The town was seen, according to the community, as a “dormitory town”\(^{57}\) perceived as negative aspect. The inhabitants would go to work in the bigger towns without even using Montivilliers’ facilities. But there was potential for implementing tourism.

With the mayor’s intention to change this perception, the town started its first tourism plan and first abbey renovation into a place that will become a museum. Transforming the abbey into a museum was already in the community’s mindset. Indeed, France had already reused a lot of its religious heritage in museums. (Coomans, 2018) Fitting in with the new well-established library which had brought openness to the abbey through sharing cultures.

Before this initiative, MHAD in Montivilliers was leading the way in tourism and cultural activities such as guided tours and conferences. Hence, local government took over the tourism aspect for this new strategy as they had to transition from a small number of activities to “a higher level”\(^{58}\) of activities proposed. It went from a village with a small community and small pace to a town level with a department for tourism created. At this exact moment, there was a passing of the torch between a generation who would know the abbey as a heritage to a generation who would transform the abbey into a museum and a place of learning. This transition was done smoothly. Moreover, “this first abbey renovation really brought tourism for the first time in town”\(^{59}\).

When the renovation started, the mayor at the time “wanted that the inhabitants wouldn’t think that the abbey was just for the tourists, that there was an exhibition hall, that the abbey was open often.”\(^{60}\) Therefore, the feeling of belonging was put forward, to whom this abbey belongs to? Most of the community only interacted with the abbey from outside and “never came inside during Middle Ages

\(^{55}\) “Permettent d’avoir un lieu attractif pour maintenir le commerce de proximité.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15\(^{th}\) 2023 - Zoom Meeting

\(^{56}\) “Un petit centre de commerces avec des industries locales et de l’artisanat local.” - President MHAD - April 26\(^{th}\) 2023 - Montivilliers

\(^{57}\) “cité dortoir” - Responsible for the tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15\(^{th}\) 2023 - Zoom meeting

\(^{58}\) “Passer à une échelle supérieur.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15\(^{th}\) 2023 - Zoom meeting

\(^{59}\) “L’abbaye quand elle a été restaurée en 2000, je pense que c’est à ce moment la que le tourisme a commencer.” - President of MHAD - April 26\(^{th}\) 2023 - Montivilliers

\(^{60}\) “Ce qu’il voulait ce n’était pas que les gens de la ville considèrent que l’abbaye, c’était que pour les touristes.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15\(^{th}\) 2023 - Zoom meeting
because it did not belong to them”, It belonged to the nuns. But now, this relationship between the abbey and the inhabitants was kept in time even if the library opened the building a bit more. For some people, this part is not for them. At the time, the mayor, wanted to make the renovation for the montivillions and by the montivillions even when voting between the different choices for the renovation.\textsuperscript{62} (Fidelin, D. ed, 2015) Because this feeling of the abbey not being for the inhabitants can still be felt now. Indeed, according to one of the association’s presidents “The abbey was a bit complicated to go to because it was not meant for the associations in the first place”\textsuperscript{63}. According to Ronström, during the last 20th century, city centres were arranged to attract new inhabitants, tourists and capital. (Ronström, 2013) In this idea, people who did not fit into these categories were said with “historic aestheticization” that this part of the city does not belong to them. (Ronström, 2013) So, the local government tried to alter this feeling and make the inhabitants more aware of their heritages, especially inside the main one: the abbey. This is why a "show tour" was created. An exhibition around the abbey with different materials and methods such as videos, and signs put together to make this tour like a show allowing visitors to go deeper into Montivilliers’ History.

With these first thoughts on belonging, images coming from the abbey itself need to be understood and looked through. Indeed, the building or the tangibility of a heritage is not the primary aspect of it anymore but the “narrative” and the “visual image” that the heritage producers are sharing. (Ronström, 2013) Moscardo defined narratives based on Adaval, Wyer and Hsu’s work as “the larger or broader concept of an account or a description of a sequence of events or incidents”. (Moscardo, 2020, p.3) “Stories are specific types of narratives” which are important for a place. (Moscardo, 2020, p.3) The abbey is not only about the building itself but what it represents with its history and how those heritage producers: the community and people from outside the town, visualize it. The stories also linked to the place can help connect the history, the culture, the lifestyle and the environment of a place with its heritage interpretation and visitor experience. (Moscardo, 2015) To make sense of this narrative, the local government created a “show tour”.

One of the principal visual images the town has is its own name with the abbey being inside Montivilliers’ sementical roots. It makes sense that the abbey is at the centre of the tourism plan, not only because of its central geographical place visible from far away but in the intuitiveness of the abbey inside the town’s name. (Ronström, 2015) It might be considered as one of the first and most important intangible heritage that was passed down to the town's community. But unfortunately, when interviewed, I realized that mostly older people would mention this relationship, not younger ones.

\textsuperscript{61} “Ce n’était pas leur patrimoine, parcequ’ils ne pouvaient pas rentrer quand ils étaient à l’époque médieval.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting

\textsuperscript{62} “Je considère que ce projet doit être porté par tous les Montivillions, fait pour les Montivillions. Je souhaite que l’ensemble des délibérations qui devront être prises par le conseil municipal soient adaptées à l’unanimité.”- Michel Vallery in Hommage à Michel Vallery

\textsuperscript{63} “Toujours été un peu compliqué mais pas toujours destiné aux associations au départ.” - President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers
So, the stories and images the town has can help in the creation of the identity through the branding of the town with mindscapes. It had to be considered during the first strategy by the community. Identity is “a sense of integration of the self, in which different aspects come together in a unified whole.” (Deaux, 1994, p.1) Indeed, it can be created by collecting the different “insights into what can be associated with the emergence of a culture and appropriating these insights is pertinent to the consumer’s understanding of his or her place in time and space.” (McIntosh and Prentice, 2017, p.590)

Creating this branding will be beneficial not only to the visitors but also to the community.

Montivilliers has different themes coming up from visual interpretation linked to the place. They can be found within the community and visitors’ various mindscapes. Indeed, they are infinite, as infinite as there are people who came to the town. Some of those mindscapes are shaped by the different cultures and experiences of people living in the town. The community and visitors’ mindscapes help to understand the common themes and visions throughout those mindscapes for the design of branding and marketing of Montivilliers. (Jacobs et al. 2023) The mindscapes are what people imagine of a place. It can be seen in Montivilliers as those main themes linked to the town and its heritages. Some of the main ones that the local government kept for their branding are a Medieval town with thoughts from the community such as “Identify Montivilliers by its abbey buildings and his heritage a natural place with mentioning Montivilliers’ assets as La Sente des Rivières and a town that is a village thanks to the closeness of the people with thoughts such as “Montivilliers a town where is nice to live between a village and a city.” They are the main ones but the Medieval aspect of the town was brought up as being one of the main assets.

So, with these themes in mind, the priority was to rebuild some of the town’s heritage to transform it into something that was even more the town which can create even more authenticity. (Ronström, 2013) Indeed McIntosh and Prentice mentioned that authenticity comes from self-realization and the need to escape role-playing, it entails that authenticity is closely connected to identity, autonomy, individuality, self-development and self-realization. (McIntosh and Prentice, 2017) With these mindscapes and concepts in mind, the town had to implement and try to convey as much as possible.

During the abbey’s renovation, the town had to cover some legislation that needed to be taken care of. One of them is the Monuments Historique. A “recognition from the Nation of the interest of heritage property.” (culture.gouv.fr, 2023) This recognition has different levels: the inscription and the classification. (culture.gouv.fr, 2023) In Montivilliers’ case, the abbey has been classified since 1992 helping the local government with subsidies. It can also be a challenge with a set of restrictions which need to be evaluated during the heritage production process. This recognition also helped with the identity and pride of the inhabitants because it is a label recognised at the national level.

Right after the renovation, the label Ville et Pays d’art et d’Histoire which can be translated as Art and History Town or County, was implemented. At the time, it was not yet acquired. But, the local government took the label’s charter and tried to implement everything so that they could have some

64 “Monti-viller ou il fait bon vivre, entre petit village et grande ville.” - Inhabitant - April 21st 2023 - Association meeting
focus in their implementation. Indeed, having an abbey to take care of is not easy and is a real challenge. This charter helped to understand more the challenges and the new implementations they would need for this type of heritage. Also, they wanted to be part of this label later on which already helped in planning for the abbey’s future. Also, the label handicap is a label that proves that a place is accessible for disabled people “followed the same system as the other label.”65 But the town does not have it still.

The labels can help with the recognition of spaces. Nevertheless, even without that, the issue has already arisen. The accessibility issue within heritage sites can come from an aestheticization of the town. Indeed, with a theme such as a Medieval town, adding accessibility access can take away this predefined idea of a medieval town in people’s imagination. It might be the same for the inhabitants, but it is taking away the image they had of the abbey. “The explanations and the instructions that each label had were the pillars of the town’s tourism plan for the first strategy even if there were other things that were added to the mix.”66 Also, heritage can sometimes be left behind in terms of accessibility. (Ronström, 2015) So, it needs to be thought about during the heritage production process.

Those different labels and recognition were the basis of the first strategy and renovation of the abbey. In the 1990s, the abbey’s first restoration occurred. The abbey was finished in 2000 and became the town’s tourism centre thanks to its new installations and its geographically central place. To welcome visitors, the municipality tried to have “an office centre by the train station”67, but it did not work as no one was going there but more and more people were going to the abbey. Moreover, it became the unofficial tourism centre of the town. “At that time, there were not a lot of things you could visit, only the church and the cemetery”68 probably due to the lack of preservation and an unfinished tourism plan. Also, “It was a place that was used not only for the tourists who were seeking information but also for the inhabitants due to its central part in the town.”69

Bringing attractiveness to change Montivilliers’ image was the main objective of this new phase that the town developed. Indeed, trying to pass on to another level and generation the heritages was something that needed to be thought and different aspects came into mention. Aspects being: the

65 “J’ai fait la même chose quand j’ai travaillé sur le label tourisme handicap.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting
66 “L’application politique touristique de la ville après il y a eu d’autres éléments mais c’étaient les piliers.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting
67 “Un agent dédié à la gare puis à l’abbaye.” - Current Mayor - March 29th 2023 - Zoom Meeting
68 “Montivilliers n’avait eu l’intérêt de développer eux-mêmes un office de tourisme parce qu’à l’époque il y avait l’Église abbatiale et le cimetière à aller voir et donc il n’y avait rien d’autre.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting
69 “C’est devenu rapidement, l’accueil touristique aussi bien que pour les habitants que pour les touristes.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting
adequate transformation, the sense of belonging, openness and stories helping to create a branding with their authenticity put on a place, were thought of during this process. Themes for this branding had to be found throughout the different visions in the mindscapes. It is the primordial aspect of the town’s identity. When the abbey’s adaptive re-use occurred labels and classification were crucial not only for the recognition but for the future of Montivilliers. Some labels were a challenge for the tourism plan and renovation. But they are keys to understanding the different challenges that lie ahead of the community and the world.

After the first abbey renovation, maintaining and enhancing the site as well as the town’s heritage was undertaken.
7.3 Heritage Production in-between the first and second Tourism Plan

When the abbey was up and running, there was a time when the managing team had to make a few changes within the structure such as: “adding different languages to the show tour so the tourists could enjoy it”\textsuperscript{70}. On the one hand, it helped to have “a wider range of tourists coming from Europe”\textsuperscript{71} and therefore attracted more tourists to the city centre shops as well as the abbey’s accessibility through audio guides for the tourists. On the other hand, it did not help with Montivilliers’ openness as it made the place more tourism-oriented and felt less open for the inhabitants. It feels quite difficult with a separation between one side of the abbey where the library is, with this idea of freedom and the other side that seems to be for visitors or an educated audience.

While managing the abbey, the town went through another wave of heritage production throughout the different heritages that the town possesses.

Montivilliers’ local government “created signs in 2005”\textsuperscript{72} inside the town. They created a heritage route which links the different heritages with signs and symbols explaining the heritages' stories and has a specific path for the tourists to take when they come to the town. (Timothy, D and Boyd, S, 2006) It might not be a historical reason for this route, but it is a type of heritage production that helps bring visitors inside the town. (Timothy, D and Boyd, S, 2006) Nevertheless, it leads to hiding or avoiding some parts of Montivilliers like the suburbs creating a separation between the inhabitants living inside the centre and those living in the suburbs while keeping the tourists inside the tourism space inside the city centre.

The route was added after the abbey’s renovation. Realizing that the tourists needed some navigation and structure throughout the town with reading signs and a purpose in their visit. This route can help the visitors stay a bit longer and enjoy fully their visit without missing any of the heritages the town wants them to see. Because some of the heritages such as the Brisgaret or La Sente Des Rivières are located a bit outside of the city centre. (Figure 1) This route can thus be seen as part of the marketing plan. Montivilliers’ tourism department “are going through them as we speak and are not sure if they are going to keep them”\textsuperscript{73} as the signs are in a very poor condition, a bit outdated and have no texts in English. One of the inhabitants thought: “It would be nice to add to this already made tour, more

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{70}“Évoluer le parcours en passant par un système audio guide en six langues.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15\textsuperscript{th} 2023 - Zoom meeting
\item \textsuperscript{71}“Le parcours spectacle, on avait un public européen.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15\textsuperscript{th} 2023 - Zoom meeting
\item \textsuperscript{72}“Ont été installés en 2005.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15\textsuperscript{th} 2023 - Zoom meeting
\item \textsuperscript{73}“On a fait un constat, un état des lieux qui est encore soumis à réflexions.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting
\end{itemize}
modern technologies.” \(^74\) But these are not meant for the inhabitants specifically as they do not need signs to navigate through the town.

*Pays d’Art et d’Histoire* which the town took an example of for their first strategy, is a label which can be translated as *Art and History County*. It is one of the main heritage-linked works the town went through in the early 2010s. This label awards a place who have been making events to promote heritage to their community, the visitors and a young audience. (culture.gouv.fr, 2023) Most of the time attributed when a place has defined criterias like having heritages and enough tourism facilities. This label has a charter with specific rules that need to be followed if the town or a county wants to be part of it. For Montivilliers, “the charter was already implemented broadly such as welcoming the schools, do actions for the inhabitants ...”\(^75\) So, there was already some planning and structure done before obtaining the label which will help with the town’s visibility. This label would help such as the *Monument Historique* bring recognition and help the inhabitants participate more in larger projects with the pride they can feel from the town receiving such a label. The mayor in 2014, “wanted to make Montivilliers an *Art and History Town* and not an *Art and History County*.”\(^76\) According to him, “with all the heritages that the town have, it would be easy to have it.”\(^77\) So, the municipality “started to create their project\(^78\) to be part of this label. But, in the process, the Ministry of Culture realised that the town itself couldn’t be part alone in this label due to the numerous amounts of towns around Montivilliers already having it. Adding up to this, “Montivilliers didn’t have enough tourism facilities – No hotels or restaurants- so it had to be at a county level.”\(^79\) Therefore, the local government applied at the CU level to become *Art and History County*, and things were on. “Montivilliers in this label is more focused on natural and medieval heritages which is different from the bigger town of Le Havre.

\(^74\) “Le parcours fléché (...) le valoriser avec des méthodes un peu plus modernes.” - Former Mayor - April 30th 2023 - Montivilliers

\(^75\) “Je vais prendre la charte de pays d’art et d’histoire et je vais appliquer tout ce qui est demandé de la Charte à l’abbaye même si on n’est pas labellisé : accueil de scolaires, actions envers les habitants,...” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting

\(^76\) “Je voulais faire de Montivilliers une ville d’art et d’histoire.” - Former Mayor - April 30th 2023 - Montivilliers

\(^77\) “tout ce que vous avez mérite et ira aucun problème pour avoir le label ville d’art et d’histoire.” - Former Mayor - April 30th 2023 - Montivilliers

\(^78\) “on commence à monter un projet.” - Former Mayor - April 30th 2023 - Montivilliers

\(^79\) “Pour être honnête, je ne pense pas que Montivilliers ait toutes les capacités avaient vraiment toutes les capacités pour être ville d’art et d’histoire au niveau hôtels ou des restaurants.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting
with a contemporary heritage (Perret buildings)”\(^80\). Indeed, “those two towns are complementary”\(^81\) because they have different mindscapes that visitors can go to and explore in the CU.

To continue, the town underwent another heritage production and renovation: L’Aître de Brisgaret. This heritage had the building renovation undertaken around the beginning of the 2010s and was finished in 2013. (Figure 8,9) “There are conferences happening about these types of cemeteries. In Normandy, a few still exist which makes the place one of the rarest pieces of the heritage Montivilliers have.”\(^82\) Thus, it had to be taken care of. The chapel had the most restoration with the windows discovered at their original place. (Ville de Montivilliers, 2023) This renovation has nothing to do with any tourism planning and was tackled because the building needed renovation along with its rare status made the renovation inevitable. A cemetery is also somewhere where memory is at its prime. A place where uncountable inhabitants have links with families from the town going back from generation to generation. It is therefore fundamental to restore this piece of heritage, personal for the inhabitants.

In 2017, the fountain was restored due to the failure of the water system. (Figure 10) The municipality “decided to let a local school called the Apprentice Training Centre with students who are specialised in redoing stonework.”\(^83\) The local government decided to use the local community craftsmanship for this project to have a positive impact on the community. On the heritage production side, the fountain has lost its original purpose. But, it is still perceived as one of the main heritage. Indeed, the fountain has lost its purpose but not its image and the idea of the fountain that is in the inhabitants’ minds. It was transformed over time, by the inhabitants themselves, into a cardinal point for meetings and sitting either to talk with friends or family or to wait for the bus. Its location is important. It needed to be refurbished due to being used through time and its degradation. This refurbishment will help with Montivilliers’ branding and especially, keeping its identity.

\(^80\) “Pays d’art et d’histoire, très acté reconstruction Perret et le nautisme alors que Montivilliers patrimoine naturel et patrimoine historique médiéval.” - Responsible for Cultural activities and events - March 29\(^{th}\) 2023 - Zoom meeting

\(^81\) “On est complémentaire.” - Former Mayor - April 30\(^{th}\) 2023 - Montivilliers

\(^82\) “Des colloques sont organisés pour les cimetières comme Brisegaret, ce qui montre son importance et sa visibilité.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - June 2nd 2023 - Montivilliers

\(^83\) “Faire appel au CFA pour remettre en valeur la fontaine.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - June 2\(^{nd}\) 2023 - Montivilliers
“In 2018, an incident happened inside the abbey.” Indeed, the south aisle’s wooden floors collapsed and had to be redone leading to the abbey’s closing. The renovation needed to be undertaken rapidly, but it would take a while to find the subsidies and the perfect renovation plan for the town. When the abbey closed, it stopped the town’s main tourism activities as it was where the *show tour* was. However, the inhabitants were not affected by this closing as they were not going into the abbey as often as the local government would have liked them to. Indeed, the inhabitants would go there once for the *show tour* or some rare specific activities. In the first few years after this incident, the local government did not make any changes in the abbey and the town to try and adapt to the visitors and inhabitants, even if they probably had some great ideas to help the municipality.

Even though Montivilliers had lost one of its main attractions, the town succeeded in 2019, after some years of promotion and implication for the *Art and History County* label, in obtaining it. After years, Montivilliers and the CU finally had it, even if the mayor at the time was a bit puzzled by the county and not town nomination as he thought that some of the towns in the county did not have the same level of heritages that Montivilliers has. The purpose of this label was also to help the tourism plan at the CU level and help the towns, that do not have heritages, to still benefit some of the visitors the other towns can have. It really felt like a reward for Montivilliers, a reward for their efforts and actions throughout the past few years. Yet, in multiple interviews, this label was never mentioned by the inhabitants. There are also no signs with this label around town. Maybe, It needs a bit more communication. But do the inhabitants need that to understand the their heritage?

In 2020, another tangible heritage was completely renovated: *The Hallettes* with the square next to it. It was finished in 2021. (Figure 7) “*The Hallettes* still serve as a selling spot in the town. The sellers are still doing handcraft objects and arts.” *The Hallettes* are bringing back the past of the town with various handicrafts and its commerce aspect. It is also one of the few “spots which was remade with some tourism perspective for the buses coming in Montivilliers.” *The Hallettes* were remade mostly because of their strategic location at the entrance of the town next to the train station. (Figure 1) It is one of the first places the visitors will see when arriving at Montivilliers. So, leaving this heritage in decay needed to be managed as it also refers to the glorious past of Montivilliers. Moreover, It helps with the medieval branding the town is going for. It is a renovation and a re-use of the place with the building having the same purpose as before. This can be seen as a certain type of historization by using the place’s history to promote the town and bring even more homogeneity into its branding.

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84 “2018, l’incident de la poutre.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting

85 “C’est pour développer le tourisme dans le pays (...) Il y a des communes qui n’ont rien du tout en termes d’art et d’histoire, ce n’est pas un reproche.” - Former Mayor - April 30th 2023 - Montivilliers

86 “Les Hallettes qui ont été rénovées, ce sont des créateurs, créatrices, c’est de travailler avec le commerce de proximité l’artisanat local.” - Current Mayor - March 29th 2023 - Zoom Meeting

87 “On a remonté les trottoirs pour l’arrivée des cars donc vous voyez on a tout prévu.” - Former Mayor - April 30th 2023 - Montivilliers
Montivilliers, in 2020, bought the Buglise House. A house with 5000m² garden located a bit outside of the city centre. This building belonged to a private owner and was bought by the municipality. Preserving its nature was too important. Even if, according to the person responsible for the abbey and tourism plan, the local government does not know what to do exactly with it, it is in a sense a preservation from destroying it but at some time, this place will need to be managed quickly to prevent its degradation.

In 2021, workshops with the inhabitants were created to realize what this place could look like and what the community wants to create with it. For now, it is an open garden with some walk paths, but this project is still ongoing and will probably become a biodiversity, educational and cultural centre (ville-montivilliers.fr, 2023) which will be linked with the abbey and La Sente des Rivières. Some of the inhabitants think that “Buglise shouldn’t be linked to La Sente des Rivières and it would be nice to have something built directly there (to La Sente des Rivières) to have classes about biodiversity.” But, “no precise project has been decided yet.” This place is also close to schools which could help with the education of the biodiversity within a natural environment. Buglise is a place for the future such as the other projects that are ongoing in Montivilliers: the abbey renovation and La Sente Des Rivières.

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88 “Peut-être pu au bout construire quelque chose d’un peu plus pédagogique (...) ou il pourrait y avoir des cours d’expliquer.” - Former Mayor - April 30th 2023 - Montivilliers

89 “Buglise est un projet encore incertain.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - June 2nd 2023 - Montivilliers
Throughout this period which went through several changes in heritage production, the abbey was managed. This management came up with various initiatives within the community and realised that other heritages needed to be taken care of. The preservation of those heritages was important for the image Montivilliers wanted to share as well as trying to fit in with the town's identity. Indeed, the recognition that some of the heritage works have or received, brought some pride among the inhabitants. It was the beginning of the tourism era in town. Heritages throughout this period were not adaptive heritages but renovated and re-used heritages. Even if some of them only kept the visual image of it. Indeed, they were all renovated to continue serving the purpose they had in the past within the future. After a few years of actions, the abbey's closing made the town realise the challenges the local government and the community, in general, will have to face to fit in with the inhabitants' image of their space. But, it also shows all the work that has been done before with all the benefits coming up from it. During this closing time, the natural heritage preservation by the community has been developed. With this new approach, the community can therefore try new ideas and thoughts on their heritages for the second abbey renovation and Montivilliers' tourism strategy.
7.4 Second Tourism Strategy and the two main ongoing projects leading it.

7.4.1 Second Tourism Strategy and the abbey

“After the closing of the abbey in 2018 due to the breaking of a beam”\textsuperscript{90}, the town lost its main attraction and was trying to keep up with activities all around town. Thanks to the first abbey restoration, “Montivilliers restored and rebuilt other build heritages and recognized that the municipality had a lot to take care of with this type of heritage which need preserving.”\textsuperscript{91} The local government needed to develop something new. With this main challenge, they realized some elements from the first strategy, were relevant for the town and had positive effects. Some other elements needed to be changed or evolved. The first strategy was very much intertwined with the abbey such as the second one but with other aspects added to it.

The first thing the local government realized is that the strategy made 25 years ago helped with the development of “the convenience stores in the city centre evolved through the different times and trends but is still maintained.”\textsuperscript{92} Indeed, the objectives of bring attractiveness was a success, according to the responsible of the tourism plan, with different shops still opened and some new shops installed.

\textsuperscript{90} “On a eu une poutre qui a cédé (...) depuis a été obligé de fermer.” - Former Mayor - April 30th 2023 - Montivilliers

\textsuperscript{91} “La restauration de l’abbaye a permis de restaurer d’autres éléments du patrimoine et de prendre en compte la spécificité de la ville sur son patrimoine bâti.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting

\textsuperscript{92} “un commerce de proximité dans le centre-ville qui a certes évoluer au fil du temps, au fil des modes, mais qui est maintenu.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting
This is one of the economic aspects of community-based tourism where tourism can have advantages for local entrepreneurs. (Simpson, 2008) But, the shops had and still have strong competition with bigger supermarkets outside of the city centre which most of the inhabitants are going to leaving an impact in the town's centre. The first renovation succeeded in putting Montivilliers on a tourism map as “one of the main attractions when talking about Middle Ages abbeys in Normandy.”

Montivilliers' first heritage production and tourism plan had already been successful according to the local government. However, it needs to be more developed. Even the inhabitants know something must be done in terms of the town’s promotion. Indeed, the community mentioned that “Montivilliers has assets that need to be valorised” and that “Montivilliers has tourism with a beautiful heritage, but it is unwell promoted.” They also mentioned that “the town has not enough tourists and tourism activities for now” because they think that Montivilliers is a town of “passage” where people just come and go. The town being a town of passage is something the inhabitants and the municipality want to change, but would it benefit them? The town's identity, for the visitors throughout the years, was a place of vacation, of short stays. The town is way smaller than Le Havre also makes it inclined to this state of mind coming outsiders. But it is up to Montivilliers’ community to decide if this part of their identity is theirs to keep.

Now, Montivilliers is going through construction work which, for the inhabitants, is taking over the branding with the medieval aspect of the town even if only the abbey is being renovated. Moreover, the current mayor also knows that “Montivilliers has heritages that have some charms, but it needs to be developed.” And yes, Montivilliers has heritages mentioned as “beautiful heritage” by their inhabitants which shows their pride, but challenges are the main concern for them. They are tied to it with an aesthetic point of view leading to authenticity.

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93 “Il y a une attente car l’abbaye est inscrite dans le réseau des Abbayes Normandie.” - Current Mayor - March 29th 2023 - Zoom Meeting

94 “La ville de Montivilliers a des atouts importants et qu’il faut absolument valoriser.” - Former Mayor - April 30th 2023 - Montivilliers

95 “Montivilliers est une ville touristique mais mal vendu avec un beau patrimoine.” - Inhabitant - April 21st 2023 - Association meeting

96 “Pas assez (touristique) à mon goût.” - Former Mayor - April 30th 2023 - Montivilliers

97 “Une ville de passage.” - Inhabitant - April 20th 2023 - Thursday Market

98 “On a des charmes à Montivilliers qu’il faut qu’on puisse mettre en avant un travail qui parle de valoriser ce que nous avons.” - Current Mayor - March 29th 2023 - Zoom Meeting

99 “beau patrimoine.” - Inhabitant - April 21st 2023 - Association meeting
Since 2018, “Montivilliers has been suffering from the abbey construction for more than four years now”\(^{100}\) and there are fewer and fewer tourists coming. One of the reasons is the constructions are taking off the image of the abbey and some of the mindscapes that people can have while seeing it which is from the Middle Ages, and it is not something linked with construction work. But most of all, it takes out the pleasing and authentic aspect of the buildings. Indeed, people seeing the scaffoldings do not see the aesthetical aspect with the authenticity coming from the building. However, this occurs only during the construction time. One of the only positive aspects is, people are accepting that they are renovating and taking care of it. It shows that something needs to be saved which can lead to positive and negative aspects.

So, during this renovation time, “the town's cultural tourism is mostly on the cultural season with shows and events that the cultural activities department is developing now.”\(^{101}\) From now on, “The abbey has been renovated since January and will be done by the end of the year.”\(^{102}\)

7.4.1.a. The challenges

The challenges with this new strategy for the local government arose. Indeed, there are new restrictions within the abbey such as new norms and security rules the municipality must follow. Due to the building being classified in the *Monument Historique*\(^ {103}\), they need to understand how they will manage their need for freedom within the space with all the rules that must be followed. It is a challenge for the local government as they might want to make the abbey and the events more connected to the inhabitants, but sometimes they cannot due to the laws and rules. But the local government have also more help from these rules in terms of preservation and renovation with granting different subsidies.

One of the main challenges are the different crises the world is facing right now such as France dealing with the “energy crisis”\(^ {104}\) Therefore, with tangible heritage, you cannot renovate a building without those issues in mind. Maintaining and preserving heritages for small towns gets harder each year, and decisions have to be taken, particularly when society is even more aware of the environmental impacts. So, in Montivilliers’ case, “the town must be more sustainable with fewer emissions but still

\(^{100}\) “On souffre actuellement sur Montivilliers ça va faire pratiquement quatre ans des travaux de l’Abbaye.” - President of MHAD - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

\(^{101}\) “Tourisme culturel au niveau de la programmation culturel.” - President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

\(^{102}\) “rénovation de l’abbaye avec les travaux de l’aile sud qui ont débuté au mois de janvier.” - Responsible for Cultural activities and events - March 29th 2023 - Zoom meeting

\(^{103}\) “Des interrogations techniques avec les nouvelles normes de sécurité et les monuments historique.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting

\(^{104}\) “Problèmes énergétique.” - President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers
have the same quality and take care at the same time of the exterior of the abbey as well." The town "cannot do the same heritage production as before due to the climate change and the sustainability thinking." The local government uses a promoting aspect with videos and articles showing that they are reusing the raw materials from the abbey while implementing new preservation techniques. They are also using local handicrafts to renovate their spaces and buildings. Giving renovations to companies from the region facilitates a sense of belonging for the inhabitants such as the fountain. This maintenance and preservation leave the towns with less money allocated to culture and tourism. Even the associations and inhabitants see that “the issue is the financing of projects.” With those crises, the local government must “bet on the future, but be careful because the future is uncertain.”

“Le Havre is too strong in terms of tourism compared to Montivilliers which is a total challenge”. Having this gigantic tourism hub next to Montivilliers can be a challenge, everyone is aware of that, even the inhabitants. On the one hand, it is a challenge as they might take away the spotlight and have more attention drawn to them. On the other hand, it can be a benefit because this hub will bring more visitors to the town. Montivilliers’ tourism department will just need to appeal to them through transportation, branding and promotion. The transportation will be more developed with a new tramway connection to Le Havre in the next few years. Montivilliers’ branding and promotion are already implemented but enhanced with this new tourism strategy.

Having a different branding as Le Havre, a more contemporary town, can help to attract visitors to Montivilliers. But, “towns such as Montivilliers must fight to maintain their position in terms of cultural events when you have cities with a lot of tourism activities next to it.” However, does the town want as much visitors as Le Havre? This is uncertain but the inhabitants’ perspective will be explored later on.

105 “La durabilité avec le zéro déchet dans la ville, (...) préservation de la qualité, les extérieurs du musée.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting

106 “On ne peut faire de la culture comme il y a 30 ans sachant le développement durable car il y a une forme d’urgence.” - Current Mayor - March 29th 2023 - Zoom Meeting

107 “Mais le problème c’est toujours les finances.” - President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

108 “Parier sur l’avenir mais alors l’avenir est tellement incertain qu’il faut être prudent.” - Current Mayor - March 29th 2023 - Zoom Meeting

109 “Je pense que la ville du Havre a un impact beaucoup trop important à côté de Montivilliers.” - President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

110 “Les petites villes comme Montivilliers, le service patrimoine doivent se battre pour maintenir une position par rapport au Havre et Étretat.” - President of MHAD - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers
7.4.1.b. The abbey’s new approach and new branding

But this year, the abbey’s second restoration has already started. A new way of approaching the abbey’s heritage production is already being explored to redesign the place and maybe bring it to a more contemporary level of interpretation. Indeed, the tourism strategy and the abbey are intertwined. Montivilliers in their branding and place marketing are still using different themes from the community and visitors’ mindscapes. To create a place marketing, it is the co-creation of values that visitors, tourists and even inhabitants have and share their views and picture of a specific place. (Dahlgaard-Park, 2015) Hence, the different themes coming from the different tourism actors. The main ones are a medieval town, a natural place, and a town as a village thanks to the closeness to people. They are like the first strategy as they represent the town’s identity even now. But other themes are also closely related to them which are important for the branding of the town. The current mayor also thinks that “it is a town in the countryside, and it must be thought this way.” The rural aspect has within its concept a feeling of remoteness, a small town which helps with the idea of closeness and natural landscapes. The closeness as, in the countryside, people who are living in the same place know each other because of their remoteness to other towns. The closeness has a family aspect feeling connected to it which later came into one of the town’s images and can help bringing some more youth.

“The target audience that the town is trying to have, are families and children” which is different from the public target 20 years ago which was more focused on an elite kind of people. Families are the identity of the town which is a town close to people. Furthermore, inhabitants mentioned the word “Family” as one of their words describing Montivilliers. Additionally, “The town needs to bring new families” because a lot of the “local schools are closing” and bringing them can help with this issue. Another side of the target audience is linked to the fact that “Montivilliers is in the same Normandy Abbey Network to bring the same kind of public in the region, different from the main audience but more on medieval art and gothic amateurs.” It can be a challenge to accommodate the two main audiences as they are also very far from each other. The second audience is an audience that is implied into the type of heritage the town has and they cannot really choose it but must

111 “Une ville un peu à la campagne, c’est de cultiver toujours cet aspect.” - Current Mayor - March 29th 2023 - Zoom Meeting
112 “La cible que l’on vise aujourd’hui, c’est les familles.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting
113 “FAMILLE” - Inhabitant - April 20th 2023 - Thursday Market
114 “Attirer de nouvelles familles.” - President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers
115 “Une population jeune qui va remplir nos écoles parceque les écoles ferment.” - Former Mayor - April 30th 2023 - Montivilliers
116 “Lien assez fort avec Fécamp, lié par nos abbayes respectives car on essaye de mutualiser un public d’amateur d’art médiéval et d’architecture romane et gothique.” - Responsible for Cultural activities and events - March 29th 2023 - Zoom meeting
accommodate to the regional tourism level. This duality is still here, and can collide which can sometimes they can work and learn from each other.

So, place marketing is mainly done by the public sector. (Dahlgaard-Park, 2015) The first level is the Destination Management Organization (DMO). (Dahlgaard-Park, 2015) As Montivilliers does not have one, Le Havre and Etretat DMO are promoting the town through their website and onsite office mentioning the medieval aspect of Montivilliers. Then, it is at the town’s level with their website, brochures and in the future will be developed directly inside the abbey’s walls.

Right now, Montivilliers is part of the “creation of the new tourism development layout which will cover 2023-2027.” Through this promotion, a lot of beneficial aspects will come out such as increasing the different places' values. (Dahlgaard-Park, 2015) Also, the town is trying to have festivals and events from the region projects linked to their heritage to bring more visibility, notoriety and promotion by big companies. “Taking part of these events can also help to have more subsidies by different companies.” Festivals can have a positive impact on the visibility of the towns but the themes of the festivals are sometimes not really connected to the town itself. Themes such as the Impressionists are not the town’s branding but more on the regional one, even if they came to the town in Montivilliers' history. Is it relevant for Montivilliers to derive from their main branding or does the municipality need to focus more on their own branding? Do they need to be closer to the story of the place or do they want more tourists? A balance is presumably what they are aiming for.

But branding needs to be constantly managed. There is never an end to it. Branding evolves due to the different social changes, new technologies and techniques to show the town's narrative. (Dahlgaard-Park, 2015) But, through Montivilliers' heritage production, the function that the place had before has to shift to have a place according to consumer appreciation. (Ronström, 2015) Because stories which people are sharing are also changing.

Like sustainability, a program cannot be fixed in cultural heritage as things will keep on happening, meaning that Montivilliers’ community must constantly adapt. Same as the inhabitants being passive or active for the visitors are acting the same way. Some are careful of every detail, about the history, taking most of the knowledge from the place and then some are there simply to say they’ve been there with no interactions whatsoever with the heritage or the locals. Those are extreme cases, and some people can be a bit of both, but the pattern is seen in Montivilliers as well. For example, each group of visitors doing guided tours in town have different types of people within them meaning that guides, who are inhabitants, need to “adapt to the audience.” With Montivilliers' countless images coming from various people with their mindscapes, a certain balance needs to be found between all

117 “Édification du nouveau schéma de développement touristique, donc qui va couvrir 2023-2027.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting

118 “Essayer de coller aux festivals de régions car cela aide pour la communication et la visibilité de la ville et permet alors de ramener des subventions pour le patrimoine de la ville.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - June 2nd 2023 - Montivilliers

119 “On adapte nos visites selon le public.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting
these images and share what is the most authentic from the community and the place you are in. Something is authentic when the inhabitants together with the society identify and connect to it. This balance can be found in acknowledging the different images from different visitors with different cultures and experiences, but they are also shaped by social relations which makes them easier to find as it is universal. But society is evolving so “tourism sites always need to evolve and assert themselves to adapt through time.”

But in a broader picture, “different factors linked to sustainability lead in having more adaptation” such as “renovating the buildings the town has is like preserving the history of the town and it is important for the development of tourism.” So, to preserve this history the responsible for the tourism plan thinks that they need “to not repeat the same mistakes as museums in the eighties” with a lot of pictures, texts and explanations with not a lot of interactives things to create something that will connect with the town, with their branding and more in the era of time.

So, in practice, within the abbey, the local government “got rid of the show tour which was too old” and did not get the visitors they wanted. This show tour was a flop, declared the community, because this tour was only in French and was for a distinct type of visitors who already knew a lot about the historical background, so it was for “the wrong consumer focus but still good quality Creating this show tour more artistically, excluded some part of the inhabitants. Was it the local government’s intention? The local government at the time might have thought that having those cultural points around town would help in sharing the town’s knowledge with the inhabitants, they would have come except it was meant for historical and gothic amateurs. When looking at the tour’s creation, I realized that they chose to do it within the local government without asking for the inhabitants’ help or perspectives. The local government at the time might have not thought directly about this issue of belonging but what they would perceive and not what really is.

120 “Un site touristique doit se regarder et doit évoluer.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting

121 “Des considérants écologiques qui sont indiscutables, il faut vraiment s’adapter.” - Current Mayor - March 29th 2023 - Zoom Meeting

122 “Restaurer tous nos bâtiments que l’on a c’est l’histoire qu’il faut garder et je crois que c’est important et c’est ça qui peut faire développer justement le tourisme.” - Former Mayor - April 30th 2023 - Montivilliers

123 “Critiqué les scénographies ou les muséographies des années 80 ce n’est pas pour refaire la même erreur des années après.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting

124 “Le parcours à l’intérieur n’existe plus, c’était devenu du matériel vieillissant.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting
Moreover, this *show tour* “took most of the space inside the abbey, so the tourism department couldn’t do anything they wanted.”\(^{125}\) Indeed, exhibitions or events couldn’t be possible in some parts of the buildings. The tourism department was blocked within this abbey with something that was not even the town’s DNA. They could not have more freedom with this type of installation. With this feeling taking over for a few years, they took this feeling of being stuck in their walls even more seriously. It was not fitting with this feeling of freedom felt in the library. This pessimistic feeling would not fit any branding or marketing aspects becoming an obstacle.

Another issue arose, the municipality realized, while renovating the abbey for the first time, that they did not think about the visitors. Indeed, the tourism department felt from the previous local government that “now that the abbey and its equipment delivered, you have to deal with bringing the tourists.”\(^{126}\) So, in a sense the previous municipality took the “right path but in reverse”\(^{127}\) finishing with planning a strategy which should have been done before or at the same time as the abbey’s restoration.

“The abbey is the container and what it contains can change through the seasons and the exhibitions”\(^{128}\) meaning that according to the responsible for the cultural activities, it will probably become a much more open space, a place of culture, with associations’ meetings and activities, of transitions, of sports,…\(^{129}\) If the abbey becomes a museum, “it must be a place of exchange, to do things to learn”\(^{130}\). Try “to make the visit of heritages more immersive and less typical, less inactive”\(^{131}\).

A blank canvas that can be used whenever the town needs to and used for temporary exhibitions. It must have “a playful approach to bring the families and have a lot of interactive activities with

\(^{125}\) “Moins la possibilité de faire avant à cause de la place que prenait le parcours spectacle dans le bâtiment.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting

\(^{126}\) “Maintenant que l’équipement est livré, que l’abbaye est restaurée, débrouillez-vous à faire venir les touristes.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting

\(^{127}\) “Prendre le chemin à l’envers.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting

\(^{128}\) “On peut avoir un contenant qui est l’abbaye et un contenu un peu plus évolutif qui permet d’évoluer.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting

\(^{129}\) “En faire un lieu beaucoup plus ouvert, un lieu de culture, de vie associative, de transition, d’évènement sportif, ...” - Responsible for Cultural activities and events - March 29th 2023 - Zoom meeting

\(^{130}\) “Le musée est un lieu d’échange, on peut aller au musée à n’importe quel moment, on aura de quoi s’occuper, on aura de quoi apprendre.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting

\(^{131}\) “Une visite immersive qu’une visite classique et passive en vérité.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting
different medium so that everyone can enjoy in their way the abbey.” 132 Especially, “trying to have less text and more interactive things.” 133

There are initiatives previously done in town, led by the local government, already using ideas like Micro Folie. It is a digital museum that can go anywhere where a cultural centre is in France and the world. In Montivilliers, it already goes around different places such as the Hotel Dieu and can adapt to the needs and desires of the inhabitants. Events are happening linked to workshops, readings, conferences, creative workshops, board games, and VR… (culture.gouv.fr, 2023)

Even if, during the first strategy, the abbey was renovated without thinking about the visitors, having this blank canvas can assist in creating a space that could fit everyone. At the moment, the town’s tourism strategy is not complete and just premisses of the local government’s thoughts for the future were shared. Having this place for the visitors and the inhabitants can aid in sharing different stories from the town and help tourism planners to have something more sustainable and authentic. It will help with what is fitting the town or not. So the abbey, “will be a place where tourists and inhabitants meet” 134 where “the inhabitants take over the place and create their own heritage.” 135 When saying “own heritage” it refers to the inhabitants creating their memories and images of the abbey through their experiences of the town. But, they need to have other memories not only about the abbey, “the inhabitants also as to take over their own town.” 136

But “does the public want this kind of thing with more temporary things than a more permanent one?” 137 From some of the inhabitants' point of view, what they know about the abbey's renovation is “a place where it is open to the montivillions and to other people with temporary exhibitions a place not like a normal visit and the inhabitant find it very interesting.” 138 Others, think that “It needs to

132 “Un parcours ludique pour attirer les enfants, les ados,... avec des technologies nouvelles et ludique dont tout le monde pourrait y trouver son compte.” - President of MHAD - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

133 “Pas trop de textes, c’est visuel.” - President of MHAD - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

134 “Un lieu de rencontre avec les habitants et les touristes.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting

135 “Qu’ça devienne un lieu dont ils s’emparent et qu’ils patrimonialisent.” - Responsible for Cultural activities and events - March 29th 2023 - Zoom meeting

136 “Quelque chose que l’on s’emploie à faire c’est que les montivillions s’emparent de leur ville.” - Responsible for Cultural activities and events - March 29th 2023 - Zoom meeting

137 “Esceque c’est ça maintenant la tendance, que les gens veulent plus de liberté.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting

138 “Elle soit ouverte aux Montivillions et aux autres personnes avec des expositions éphémères et beaucoup moins un lieu de visite classique et je trouve ça très intéressant.” - President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers
have a proper museum with more modern mediums”\textsuperscript{139} and that “some kind of revisited show tour must be kept because with only temporary things we are more closing than opening ourselves to the world.”\textsuperscript{140} People in general are always separate when it comes to opinions, and this is the case for the inhabitants. Nevertheless, it really helps in heritage production and tourism planning as you can have all those possibilities and understand all the perspectives and visions that the inhabitants can have. For the local government, including the inhabitants, helps in making them more credible and therefore helps with the trust in decision-making.

\textbf{7.4.1.c. Education and Openness}

The local government decided to go on this path because they knew “some of the shows before couldn’t work because it doesn’t attract a certain part of the population.”\textsuperscript{141} Indeed, to make people come to heritage sites, “culture must be more accessible to a larger part of the population.”\textsuperscript{142} Even with places such as the library and the Hotel Dieu, they start to date back. A new wave needs to arrive.

Culture and knowledge are crucial for heritage production more than ever now. Indeed, one of the local government’s main objectives is “to bring the montivillious inside the abbey because most of them never step a foot inside the cluster”\textsuperscript{143} and “to give them priority in every projects.”\textsuperscript{144} Inhabitants were not coming inside the abbey because before, it would not fit with their visions inside their mindscapes. But projects linked to having a cultural centre are popping up around France especially one in a town close to Le Havre where an abbey was transformed into a cultural centre: les Franciscaines in Deauville. This example could aid Montivilliers with the design of this new cultural centre.

One of the main objectives is to bring the inhabitants and the tourists together. So that the inhabitants can share their knowledge and interest in the place with the tourists, producing a space even more genuine and authentic. For example, when the tourism department is “doing guided tours, they have a mix of inhabitants and tourists where the inhabitants are sharing their stories and their narratives to

\textsuperscript{139} “Peur s’il y a pu un peu de musée.” - President of MHAD - April 26\textsuperscript{th} 2023 - Montivilliers

\textsuperscript{140} “Il faut absolument faire ce parcours spectacle sinon si c’est des trucs éphémères enfin moi j’ai l’impression qu’on se renferme un peu sur nous-même (...) plutôt d’ouvrir vers l’extérieur.” - Former Mayor - April 30\textsuperscript{th} 2023 - Montivilliers

\textsuperscript{141} “Des spectacles qui ne vont pas toucher un certain nombre d’habitant.” - Current Mayor - March 29\textsuperscript{th} 2023 - Zoom Meeting

\textsuperscript{142} “Il faut démocratiser la culture.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15\textsuperscript{th} 2023 - Zoom meeting

\textsuperscript{143} “Travailler pour faire venir les montivillious et faire connaître le patrimoine montivillious aux montivillious car Beaucoup de Montivillious n’ont jamais mis les pieds dans le cloître.” - Responsible for Cultural activities and events - March 29\textsuperscript{th} 2023 - Zoom meeting

\textsuperscript{144} “Donner en priorité aux montivillious.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15\textsuperscript{th} 2023 - Zoom meeting
the tourists and that is how stones (buildings) and nature can become even more.” With the guided tours, different mindscapes and visions are colliding, the inhabitants are challenging their mindscapes of their everyday life experiences. This experience is totally different from a visitor’s one. It is part of community-based tourism with a sociocultural aspect, improving wellbeing.

The inhabitants are linked to their heritages through their own stories. Indeed, héritage and patrimoine, the two French words for heritage, are intertwined in people’s minds because the places are connected to personal memories. Those memories mixed with a specific past with nowadays activities create stories when they are told.

When the abbey was still open, “the receptionist was more motivated to share and sell Montivilliers and the CU rather than people from Le Havre and Etretat DMO.” They knew their town and were happy to share it with people. Even if these receptionists are inhabitants, by having this hub where other inhabitants meet, there is an exchange of knowledge which is essential for trust, safety and security within the town. This sense of belonging is already there. It just probably needs to be pushed forward in this new strategy.

Simultaneously, schools are making fewer and fewer visits to the town’s heritage leading to a loss of their heritage by the youth. Children and teenagers want more interactive commodities and learn more through the actions of doing it, through experience rather than reading the facts. Also, schools are going less and less to the different sites due to the transportation costs. Schools have been through a lot of changes in the way of learning the kids and older museums are less appealing to younger ones. Therefore, the municipality is offering more interactive visits to the schools and “do more workshops linked to the Middle Ages” rather than things linked to “biodiversity which are more taught in schools.” Moreover, in the new strategy temporary events such as escape games, children’s events or more fun and playful exhibitions with a mix of history and facts attract their target audiences, the families and children.

145 “Sur une même manifestation avoir des touristes et des locaux et laisser parler les gens entre eux pour avoir ces anecdotes.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting

146 “Les agents municipaux qui étaient à l’accueil étaient beaucoup plus motivée pour vendre leur territoire que les agents de l’office de tourisme du Havre.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting

147 “Les habitants c’est aussi a eu de les former pour qu’ils puissent parler de leur territoire.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting

148 “Vienmont faire des ateliers sur le Moyen-Âge.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting

149 “Tout ce qui était en lien avec la biodiversité était beaucoup au programme scolaire, beaucoup plus que nous adultes.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting
7.4.1.d. Marketing, events and celebrations

Outside the abbey, the local government are “already doing some shows in the neighbourhood of the town to bring culture to everyone.” Indeed, they are doing activities outside the city centre to bring culture to people in the hope that people would go to the city centre more often. Those shows “have been going on for three years and are one of the trademarks of Montivilliers.” The shows help the inhabitants living in the suburbs to have more trust in the local government and feel fully integrated into the town. For now, Monti-Spectacles are Montivilliers’ trademark. They have been working on it for a few years now but probably later, it will be a tradition and become part of the intangible heritages.

But, some of the crisis leads to the inhabitants having less and less money to spend on travelling so “the town must create new events during summer for the people who are not going on holidays, so they can discover a new town during this period.” The image of everyday lives the inhabitants know by heart is transformed into a new perception of the space. This can help in the participation of the inhabitants with curiosity about this novelty. The weather makes it easier to bring more people to the different activities. So summer activities are one of the best marketing aspects.

For example, The local government has “giant easels with different themes put all around town to make everyone discover the artist name of their streets or this year, the different French regions.” These are coupled with different events happening during summer such as the July 14th or the Music Day. Those events help keep the pride and identity of the community with the French National Holiday, July 14th with a firework shot directly in front of the abbey. Also, the town is doing one of these French intangible heritages one day before on the 13th. Might it be because they want to have more people attending their celebrations or/and do they want to have their own day as Montivilliers own town’s day?

150 “Monti-spectacles dans les quartiers et on insiste bien en permanence sur tous les quartiers. La culture c’est gratuit et accessible à tous y compris au quartier qui n’ont pas l’habitude ou les moyens d’accéder à la culture.” - Responsible for Cultural activities and events - March 29th 2023 - Zoom meeting

151 “Les Monti-Spectacles c’est un peu la marque de fabrique de Montivilliers depuis 3 ans.” - Responsible for Cultural activities and events - March 29th 2023 - Zoom meeting

152 “On tiens vraiment cette période de crise économique à ce que les montivillions qui ne partent pas en vacances.” - Responsible for Cultural activities and events - March 29th 2023 - Zoom meeting

153 “Les gens qui ne partent pas en vacances, au moins dans leur ville ils pourront découvrir quelque chose comme s’ils étaient dans une autre ville.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting

154 “J’ai travaillé sur les chevalets géants(...) qui avec la première édition des noms d’artistes représentant les différentes rues.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting
Even if things are happening in summer, things as to be developed all year around to be more sustainable. One of the main challenges is to “deseasonalized tourism.” Bring culture during winter because it is the coldest season, people are losing contact with each other, and it is cold but the abbey can be a refuge. The Christmas market, located next to the abbey, is using this setting to bring people together during one weekend. Indeed, more things need to happen all year round and “natural heritage visits can't happen during winter.” Maybe try “to create a festival for the abbey during the non-tourism season.” One event which “brought a lot of people and fun to the abbey was an event called: abbeys in Playmobil where children and adults can learn about the historical side places they are in while having fun looking at those small figurines.” It occurred in October 2022, and was one of the best events the town had in terms of visits.

Therefore, “the three main events Montivilliers has are the open-air jumble sale, the Christmas market and July 13th.” The town needs to perpetuate those events that are “still working because they are popular and free events that everyone knows about, it’s like a tradition.” “Tradition implies the handing over from one generation to another of cultural or natural entities, such as abstract habits, norms, values or material objects and artefacts” (Ronström, 2005, p.3) Events become traditions through time. They are popular, and free and feel open to everyone, even if they are located outside the abbey and not inside. By keeping those traditions alive, the inhabitants are more inclined to have the abbey renovated as the local government keeps on doing those traditions. The inhabitants, when asked during the research about their participation in the cultural activities of the town, never answered no but mentioned a lot of that, when they like the themes and when it is traditional and popular events they would take part in it. “Mostly about celebratory events or events

155 “Désaisonnalisé le tourisme.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting
156 “Le patrimoine naturel malheureusement, c’est très saisonnalisé.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting
157 “Positionné pour faire un festival étonnant abbaye normande.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting
158 “Les abbayes normandes en Playmobil, eu du monde tout le temps, permet d’expliquer ce qu’était une abbatiale.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting
159 “Les trois plus gros évènements de l’année sont le marché de noël, les vides greniers et le 13 juillet.” - Current Mayor - March 29th 2023 - Zoom Meeting
160 “Fonctionne parce que c’est l’histoire, une fête populaire, historique et il y a une tradition.” - Current Mayor - March 29th 2023 - Zoom Meeting
for children and the market.” They would also “participate in the July 14th, the Christmas market, the open-air jumble sale but not the yearly cultural program.”

The Thursday market is “happening every Thursday since the Middle Ages and is part of the intangible heritage of the town.” Markets are hubs of people from different backgrounds meeting at the same time every week. Most of the time, markets are also a place of sharing and seeing other people part of the community, such as the local government meeting the inhabitants. Unfortunately, now the market is way smaller and “needs more dynamism” people are going outside of the town centre, to supermarkets in Montivilliers suburbs, to buy food. This is why the community wants to continue because “it is like a tradition that must be maintained and people from all around Montivilliers is going to this market” Indeed, the town already took over some ideas by adding a summer market on Fridays during summers. It also brings people to other parts of the town especially the Hallettes where handcrafts and local shops are mostly present which helps the locals.

161 “Surtout événements pour les enfants, festifs et marché.” - Inhabitant - April 20th 2023 - Thursday Market

162 “Participation au 14 juillet, marché de noël (...), les vides greniers mais pas programme culturel.” - Inhabitant - April 21st 2023 - Association meeting

163 “Une institution pareille, le marché du jeudi qui date du Moyen-Âge.” - President of MHAD - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

164 “ça manque de dynamisme.” - Former Mayor - April 30th 2023 - Montivilliers

165 “Le marché du jeudi doit perdurer, les gens viennent d’ailleurs pour venir au marché car c’est une tradition qu’il faut maintenir et moderniser.” - President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers
7.4.1.e. Inhabitants and associations perspectives

Mindscapes are necessary to have a clear understanding of Montivilliers’ different aspects. But the feelings attached to these mindscapes, are valuable to perceive the community’s different actors’ point of view. It will aid in understanding later, what is the true essence of the town that needs to be preserved. The inhabitants had feelings linked with their history and heritage: “History”\textsuperscript{166}, “Abbey”\textsuperscript{167} and “Mont-villier the former name of the town. They feel, that it is a town in the countryside, like a big village but not a town. Leading to proximity with members of the community: “Convivial”\textsuperscript{168}, “Proximity”\textsuperscript{169} and the family aspect. They say that they “have a wonderful abbey with the nuns’ canteen having superb arcs and now having amazing paint exhibitions in it.”\textsuperscript{170} On the local government side, those same feelings and perspectives are seen as well as the associations.

Indeed, some of the associations are very happy about “the renovation of the abbey because they will finally use it for their events and exhibitions.”\textsuperscript{171} Montivilliers is a “pleasant town to live”\textsuperscript{172} with “beautiful monuments to see with always some greenery.”\textsuperscript{173} The community, therefore, agree on those feelings which is the basis of the environment and atmosphere of the town which is why people should come, visit and not destroy those feelings with unwell managed heritage production. Those feelings show that the inhabitants appear pleased and safe in their town. They are very close to their history and their aesthetic value.

For this new strategy, the challenge is to understand “how does the local government start from a conventional build heritage (…) to a tourism development which could intertwine, build heritage to a natural heritage, a more demanded, expected by the public and even more up to date.”\textsuperscript{174} The local government need to think about “other types of heritages such natural heritage in case their main

\begin{small}
\textsuperscript{166} “Histoire” mentioned three times among the inhabitants

\textsuperscript{167} “Abbaye” mentioned once among the inhabitants

\textsuperscript{168} “Convivialité” mentioned twice among the inhabitants

\textsuperscript{169} “Proximité” mentioned once among the inhabitants

\textsuperscript{170} “On a des magnifiques bâtiments abbatiaux, il y a le réfectoire de l’abbaye avec ces voutes qui sont superbes, les expositions de peintures ici c’est magnifique.” - Former Mayor - April 30th 2023 - Montivilliers

\textsuperscript{171} “L’abbaye rénove on pourra créer aussi des expositions et utiliser ce lieu.” - President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

\textsuperscript{172} “Une ville agréable à vivre.” - President of the Twinning - April 26\textsuperscript{th} 2023 - Montivilliers

\textsuperscript{173} “Il y a des beaux monuments à voir et il y a toujours de la verdure.” - President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

\textsuperscript{174} “Comment on part d’un patrimoine bâti classique (…) vers une valorisation touristique qui va mêler ce patrimoine bâti à un patrimoine plus à la demande, aux attentes du public ou plus au fil du temps, qui est notamment le patrimoine naturel.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting
\end{small}
Which is why the two new different ongoing projects such as the abbey and *La Sente Des Rivières* link these two heritages together and promote it.

**7.4.1.f. Abbey Renovation and Tourism Plan Summary**

Through this chapter, Montivilliers tried to balance different positive and negative outcomes of previous heritage productions. Some needed to be changed while some others needed to be developed. The abbey's renovation brings difficulties to the town's image. However, this is a temporary inconvenience compared to the challenges lying ahead. Indeed, preserving while developing a place more sustainable is one of Montivilliers' main aims.

Bringing up new branding and promotion ideas while adapting and evolving to the visitors and the inhabitants is one of their challenges. Indeed, the different themes the town had, were kept but brought up to another level of interpretation from the different actors for this new strategy. To succeed, the different levels of space needed to be analysed, with the perceived space: is space the inhabitants see from a tourism perspective; the conceived place: with the local government branding and marketing using the narratives to share their stories from the place and the lived space: which is the everyday life use from the inhabitants with their stories, their experiences. Those three levels need to combine to have sustainability.

A new approach to the abbey as a cultural centre, with freedom as its main theme, will totally change from the *show tour*. The abbey will be utilised for new events and activities. Novelty is crucial for the inhabitants because it is a hub that brings the inhabitants to Montivilliers' centre while keeping them entertained. Culture will be more accessible for schools and people all year round and will keep on hosting these traditions that the inhabitants are very much attached to.

Apart from that, community-based tourism was determined throughout this chapter as the economic and social aspect but what about the environmental one?
7.4.2 2nd Tourism Strategy and Sustainability through the Natural Walk

![Figure 17. Ongoing construction work at the natural walk of La Sente des Rivières](image)

The municipality is therefore trying “to mix the built heritage that was the main focus for a while with a natural heritage which can be seen as a more tourism outcome nowadays.” UNESCO defined natural heritage as “natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which are of outstanding universal value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view.” (UNESCO, 1972, p.2) Indeed, the local government “want to have a variety of offers between the different heritages.” So, when the opportunity to rehabilitate the natural walk of La Sente des Rivières, the municipality brought another type of tourism which is natural or green tourism.

Before the renovation, the walk was a pleasant moment for a lot of the inhabitants. Some “loved going there on Sundays” likely to enjoy nature and calmness close to their house. Others would “use Montivilliers mostly for this walk.” By “use” this inhabitant meant that the walk was something they were doing more regularly than using the tangible heritage of the town. Moreover, a lot of the guided tours, made by the tourism department, were made in La Sente des Rivières and were cherished by the inhabitants and visitors. “They were learning things about the place, but you also walk and enjoy

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175 “On part d’un patrimoine bâti vers une valorisation touristique qui va mêler ce le patrimoine plus à la demande, aux attentes du public comme le patrimoine naturel.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting

176 “Diversifier l’offre.” - Responsible for Cultural activities and events - March 29th 2023 - Zoom meeting

177 “La sente des rivières, c’était ce que je faisais le dimanche matin.” - President of MHAD - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

178 “J’utilise Montivilliers surtout pour la sente des rivières, une balade.” - President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers
the weather, the nature while not thinking intellectually.”179 The idea of nature is this feeling of freedom and peacefulness during a brief instant.

But, the walk became unsafe during the night. Some parts of the walk were left behind by people who had gardens there. With the rumours of this insecurity, the visions and experiences they might have before were tarnished and altered. Security is crucial if the town wants to have families and youth as their main target. A project idea had to be developed to rehabilitate this park alongside the river and a lake and transform it into something more sustainable and family-friendly to bring safety again. It is also an important project because “La Lézarde, the town’s river has a lot of history and a river for a town it is very important.”180

The municipality asked the CEPAGE agency to take care of the project. (Commune de Montivilliers, 2022) This agency is known to renaturalize, and reorganise very sensitive places and work with sustainability. On the walk, there will be gardens for the inhabitants, a playground for children, sports activities and educational signs around the walk to talk about biodiversity and other themes with themed tours created. But this walk will also be accessible for disabled people. (Commune de Montivilliers, 2022) Having a local company take care of this project is sustainable and will contribute to the town’s heritage. This is part of community-based tourism, to improve people’s structures and plans to avoid the degradation of natural resources. (Simpson, 2008) It will also encourage the local community to learn more about their own environment. (Simpson, 2008)

The project is up and running and should be finished by November 2023. “MHAD is trying to put on an exhibition that they have on La Lézarde at the same time as the reopening of the walk.”181 So, MHAD is collaborating with the local government while helping them to have an audience interested in the exhibition. This collaboration can help to enhance the impact of the reopening through the understanding of the past while seeing all the heritage production that has been done.

On the inhabitant’s side, they are “very much pleased to rediscover La Sente des Rivières.”182 It is one of the most mentioned places and assets. Others think “Montivilliers attraction point is the abbey

179 “Plus grosse capacité de visite, des sujets qui intéressent et en plus ça se fait à l’extérieur, pas forcément beaucoup d’implications intellectuelle, on apprend des choses en se baladant.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting

180 “La lézarde, un vrai travail à faire, un cours d’eau c’est important pour une ville.” - Current Mayor - March 29th 2023 - Zoom Meeting

181 “l’aménagement de la sente des rivières donc faire correspondre à notre exposition qui raconte l’histoire de la sente des rivières.” - President of MHAD - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

182 “Sente des rivières très hâte de redécouvrir.” - Inhabitants - April 20th 2023/ April 21st - Thursday Market / Association meeting
because nature can be found anywhere else somewhere else in other towns.”

On this point, it is true that implementing natural walks can be easier than building heritages but some of the plants or species are endemic to a place and is part of natural heritage. But nature is close – geographically - to everyone and can become something the inhabitants are attached to quickly. The place has stories of things the inhabitants saw. Nature is always different whenever someone is going for a walk, it will never be the same due to weather, time, someone’s mood, someone’s former experience with the walk, the flora and fauna. The idea of change and novelty is therefore also important within natural heritage and having this heritage added to the tourism strategy will help with the abbey. Natural heritage can also have a cultural value with the restaurant that was there before, and the walk and garden heritage intricately linked. Nonetheless, will the cultural aspect of La Sente des Rivières be seen through signs? Maybe only through the guided tours which needs to be identified in the future what the community will do about it.

With the inhabitants being so enthusiastic about the walk, the municipality decided to call for their help. Indeed, the local government did a collaborative workshop in 2022, in which the inhabitants could take part in meetings to create the signs that will be up for the natural tour and give feedback on the overall project. Indeed, “the inhabitants come when it is a subject that they like because it is either something that touches them directly or a theme that they can relate to with their lives.”

Letting the inhabitants take part in the collaborative aspect is something that brings trust and pride to the place because they know that they did it. As the president of the twinning pointed out, “the inhabitants are always questioned for important projects and the local government, and the associations listen to them.”

“Sustainability is something the local government takes seriously and set within their program.”

They are “trying to be more local in the next few years.” The inhabitants see that “since the new municipality a team is on it.” Even if, during the former mayor’s time, the municipality already had sustainable development in mind. “In the new municipality, sustainability has been accounted for and

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183 “Le point d’attraction mais tout ce qui est la nature e naturel peut etre trouver dans d’autres communes.” - President of MHAD - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers
184 “On sollicite les habitants et ils se déplacent, ça dépend des sujets aussi parce qu’ils font le lien avec la vie de leur cité.” - Responsible for Cultural activities and events - March 29th 2023 - Zoom meeting
185 “Les questions importantes ou sur des projets, la municipalité à toujours voulu travailler avec les habitants avec des réunions citoyennes et la municipalité et les associations écoutent les habitants.” - President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers
186 “La transition écologique est au programme de la ville de Montivilliers.” - Current Mayor - March 29th 2023 - Zoom Meeting
187 “Miser sur le local dans les années à venir.” - Current Mayor - March 29th 2023 - Zoom Meeting
188 “Depuis la nouvelle municipalité, une équipe est là dessus.” - President of MHAD - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers
has been taken seriously with more bike lanes and bikes going around town.”

The inhabitants really perceived that the local government was doing something for the community to develop in sustainable ways such as “Association raising awareness among children already in town”

“Walks while collecting trash”, “Planting trees”, ... But they agree that “sometimes it is not visible, or it is not in their mindset.”

Sustainability is quite a new concept and inhabitants are seeing more of those actions now. It is not fully within people’s mindsets yet as it is a new thing. So, the town should keep on doing new actions for sustainability to enter into the image the town wants to reflect which is something that is worked on through the branding as the “nature” theme.

Sustainability can be to keep on obtaining different labels which can help them to have subsidies and continue on this difficult. It will also help with the town’s image on sustainable actions and will help in creating an even more welcoming town for the visitors and inhabitants living there. So, on the tourism aspect, “trying to do sustainable tourism is good but it is also a message.” If you see “a sustainable tourism place you are more inclined to learn about it and promote it somewhere else” which is why the rehabilitation of this walk is important not only for the town but for the future.

But, by recreating this place, it will become a small, protected area which can be perceived as one of the only natural reserves protected to sometimes legitimize the use of other spaces. (Ronström, 2015)

In this case, it could be the use of fields for a new mall outside the town centre. The local government is trying to preserve places with a “common heritage” compared to fields which are individual and private heritage. This construction brings more dynamism to the town and more economic safety to preserve and protect other heritages. The town preserving Buglise, having the Georges Brassens park outside the city centre for people living in the suburbs and la Sente des Rivières are already enough for tourism development. Also, those fields are not in the tourism space of the community as the image of

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189 “La municipalité je pense que oui depuis quelques années il y a eu des changements dans la durabilité avec plus de vélos et plus de pistes cyclables.” - President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

190 “La maison de l’enfance beaucoup de sensibilisation pour les enfants.” - Inhabitant - April 20th 2023 - Thursday Market

191 “Sortie randos avec ramassage de déchets.” - Inhabitant - April 20th 2023 - Thursday Market

192 “Planter des Arbres.” - Inhabitant - April 21st 2023 - Association meeting

193 “Plusieurs choses partout mais lentement et perçoit pas forcément.” - Inhabitant - April 21st 2023 - Association meeting

194 “Développement durable dans la région et pouvoir obtenir des labels et donc forcément des financements qui pourront aider à continuer sur cette voie qui est quand même difficile.” - President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

195 “Le tourisme écoresponsable c’est bien mais c’est aussi un message.” - President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

196 “Car on apprend en allant sur des lieux avec du tourisme écoresponsable et donc ça permet de promouvoir ce type de tourisme.” - President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers
which is the town centre. Heritage production is a work of decision making which is not easy to deal with different factors.

Natural heritages and cultural heritages are linked and have similarities. Indeed, this is why it is easier to implement them together. The walk went through an adaptive reuse. Indeed, being one of the inhabitants' favourite walks, the local government had to go through this renovation after some degradation and safety issues. But, it can be hard to find the balance between development and preservation of the identity of a place. This natural heritage preservation can show the different actions the local government are doing around town and what they are doing in terms of sustainability and community-based tourism. But, to do it properly, decisions for the future have to be made and some of the heritages can get lost in the process.
7.5 Loss of Heritage and decision making for the future

Indeed, when a town has different tangible heritage sites, you can have an overcrowded site and another left aside in the same destination. It might be due to the lack of interest by the visitors and the lack of money the community can have to preserve their heritage leading to the degradation or destruction of such heritage. (Saarinen, 2019) To avoid overcrowding, through different heritage productions during the past few years as well as a planned heritage route around town to spread the visitors. But, some heritages might be left behind such as the Temple.

Seeing the Temple for the first time, felt like it was left out in terms of preservation and conservation. Even its cemetery does not look managed. I am therefore wondering about which heritage the local government is choosing to preserve. They are still promoting it as part of their main heritage. Even the community are promoting it through word of mouth. After talking to the local government, the explanation they offered was that the Temple was left behind because “this monument is not a classified Monument Historique but just inscribed which gives less subsidies from the region and the government to redo it.” Therefore, a certain of money would have to go into this project and regrettably, there is “not enough promotion and attraction” from this place. Compared to “the Brisgaret, this is a classified site with an attraction from it due to its uniqueness in Normandy.”

Some kind of loss of interest in this Temple. One of the other factors of this loss can also be the location of the Temple a bit further from the town centre, uphill which makes it a bit harder for the tourists and visitors to see it. For the municipality, “it is very hard to bring people from one side of Montivilliers to another.” Even if there is a loss of interest in this Temple, maybe later the local government or the inhabitants will have another image of it and might want to save it but will it be too late?

The local government have a smaller and smaller amount of money each year and having heritages such as the abbey’s church which is going through “deterioration due to the climate change and pollution” is also something they must deal with and “maintaining heritage is something that

197 “Le temple est seulement inscrit au Monument historique donc moins de subventions du gouvernement.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - June 2nd 2023 - Montivilliers

198 “Un manque d’attractivité.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - March 15th 2023 - Zoom meeting

199 “Valorisation peu évidente car différente du Brisegaret qui est lui classé aux Monuments Historiques mais aussi est une source d’attractivité due à son coté unique.” - Responsible for tourism plan and the Abbaye - June 2nd 2023 - Montivilliers

200 “Les gens en bas monte pas forcément en haut et les gens d’en haut ne descendent pas forcément en centre-ville.” - President of MHAD - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

201 “Il y a des préjudices des aléas climatique, la pollution sur les pierres.” - Current Mayor - March 29th 2023 - Zoom Meeting
costs.”

But, “preserving the history of the place is very important for the tourism development” which is why Montivilliers has to keep its “point of contact with the tourists which is the abbey.” Indeed, the town has various heritages but the abbey as to be at the centre and therefore prioritizing some heritages is crucial for a well-managed heritage production planning so it can bring visitors to the town with this symbol that is the abbey. Will the need for preservation and the lack of money will lead to the choice of having more tourists? The town might need to find a balance.

Different projects were thought of but not continued due to various factors like finances, time,... For example, “the creation of a Michelin restaurant in the old town”, “Exhibition centre in the old high school of the town”,... Even if those projects did not come to life now does not mean they will never be done. That is for the community to think about. This last project was done because “the municipality had to choose between this new art centre or having a new sports hall.” Montivilliers also has a lot of sports clubs. The town already had cultural centres but was missing a sports hall.

Indeed, Montivilliers has to listen to all the inhabitants’ requests not only about culture which is something very important for the town’s development.

The loss of heritage can also be caused by the branding and heritage production itself with homogenisation and aestheticization. Homogeneity brings into the foreground what the community or a specific part of the community wants to develop and have a targeted period of the town being at the centre of the tourism plan. (Ronström, 2015) In Montivilliers, the Middle Ages is emphasized in the branding, when prosperity was at its maximum, rather than learning and showing the fall of Montivilliers when Le Havre arose. Also, homogeneity helps with the contemporary complexity and diversity which can be hard to grasp. (Ronström, 2015) But this homogeneity brings distinctiveness to the town with more visitors and helps to understand the different mindscapes. It can also lead to gentrification if the branding and heritage production are not well managed. (Ronström, 2015) Gentrification is one of the main issues towns are facing when tourism takes its place. Indeed, the accommodation prices close to the city centre rise forcing the inhabitants to leave. During the different interviews, I realised, it is something the community is afraid of. The example of Etretat, a town whose cultural heritage and natural specificities bring millions of tourists each year, but they leave the village devastated. Indeed, waste management issues, deterioration of the cliffs by

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202 “L’entretien du patrimoine coûte très chère.” - President of MHAD - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

203 “L’histoire qu’il faut garder et je crois que c’est important et c’est ça qui peut faire développer justement le tourisme.” - Former Mayor - April 30th 2023 - Montivilliers

204 “Un point de chute pour appeler les touristes.” - President of MHAD - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

205 “Dans les bâtiments des notaires (...) faire un restaurant de qualité, style un peu étoilé.” - Former Mayor - April 30th 2023 - Montivilliers

206 “Projet d’aménagement de l’ancien lycée abandonné car la mairie ne pouvait pas financièrement.” - President of MHAD - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

207 “On avait deux choses à faire, le sport comme ça qu’on a créé un grand complexe (...) Deuxièmement un espace culturel et bon on avait choisi le sport.” - Former Mayor - April 30th 2023 - Montivilliers
thousands of people climbing and its specific dangerousness in which the tourists do not bother to
read the signs and warnings, “the inhabitants are forced to leave the town during summer.”
Even if this example is an extreme one in the region, Montivilliers’ community is aware and is trying to find
solutions and a balance.

Using only one specific theme from the mindscapes can help in developing specific branding and place
marketing. But it can lead to forgetting some part of the heritage and history of the town. When
talking to the president of MHAD, you could see that MHAD really thought about all the different
periods in the town’s history with a variety of subjects. In fact, “the different conferences which will be
held will be one about Jules Durand who lived between the 19th and 20th centuries and another
conference about the Vikings in Normandy around the 10th century.” It is very precious to have
these different aspects of history explained and shared so it could live on. The associations are trying
to do actions to bring knowledge to people and different subjects so that people can come more easily
to conferences, exhibitions and activities they like most and learn new things on the way. The town’s
branding and promotion with natural and family themes can help in avoiding homogeneity negative
effects..

The loss of heritage is not only put down to heritage production but also other factors socially
impacting the community. Indeed, during my interviews with the presidents of associations, their main
concern was to bring youth into their organisations like the twinning of the town or MHAD who
are keeping the town’s stories and narratives alive. It is a real challenge the whole community has to
look through as it concerns Montivilliers’ future.

The inhabitants are also pointing out that the town “needs to bring more youth.” in town. Indeed,
“the number of people in associations are dropping and the average age is rising up.” MHAD also
“have an issue with the presidency and without any president, the association will be dissolved which
is the same thing that happened to a similar association in the region.”

208 “Les propres habitants de leurs villes sont obligés de partir et de s’en aller pendant la période
estivale.” - President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

209 “Programmé une conférence (...) sur Jules Durand, (...) On a un contrat avec quelqu’un (...) sur
l’héritage des vikings.” - President of MHAD - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

210 “La majorité des jumelages sont vieillissants.” - President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 -
Montivilliers

211 “On manque de jeunes.” - President of MHAD - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

212 “On doit ramener les jeunes.” - Inhabitant - April 21st 2023 - Association meeting

213 “Nombre d’adhérent diminue et puis la moyenne d’âge augmente.” - President of MHAD - April 26th
2023 - Montivilliers

214 “Il faut trouver un autre président (...) ça m’inquiète un peu (...) arrivé à l’association d’Harfleur (...) 
obligé de dissoudre l’association.” - President of MHAD - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers
"The local government and associations think that individualism is something that resurfaced causing this lack of youth in associations and cultural implications. "Associations are vital to preserve and put back heritage on track" as well as bringing the inhabitants together. They help share knowledge of their town in a way that can lead to the inhabitant’s participation, pride and sharing of identity and trust within the community as well as the place they are all sharing. (Moayeri et al. 2022). Indeed, the associations “doesn’t want to bring only younger people to their associations but people from different social backgrounds so they can come together.” But, they are still trying to do activities such as the twinning with “doing activities such as exchange between French and German teenagers travelling from both towns to learn more about their cultures.” Other things like the cinema or the event Montigeek, a comic con, are bringing dynamism and youth to Montivilliers. “This comic con was brought to life by a social centre and brought a public who are not going to most of the shows the town organises.” The Micro-Folie as mentioned above is also “something very nice for teenagers because there is screens” with new technologies. There is a real clash of generations in town and cultural heritage in general, so Montivilliers needs to develop and evolve into something that can understand the two sides of the same coin.

Even if there are some challenges ahead of the community regarding heritage production, the inhabitants were pleased to share their ideas to transform their town and use their heritage. On the sustainable side, they are thinking of “redoing the roads and the sidewalks as well as adding trees on them to make the city more welcoming as well as trees on the sidewalks to make green alleys” , “use

215 “Ils sont un peu plus individualistes” / “Il y a beaucoup d’individualisme.” - President of MHAD - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

216 “Des associations qui essayent de remettre cet héritage abandonné.” - President of MHAD - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

217 “Le challenge est d’arriver à attirer plus de personnes de différents cultures socioculturelles.” - President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

218 “Un voyage de jeune, une année, un groupe de jeunes français part à Nordhorn et l’année d’après forcement ce sont leurs correspondants allemands qui viennent chez nous.” - President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

219 “Organisé avec un centre social associatif avec une volonté de pouvoir toucher un public de jeune qui ne se retrouve pas forcément dans des activités notamment au niveau de la ville.” - Current Mayor - March 29th 2023 - Zoom Meeting

220 “La micro-folie capte un peu plus les ados avec les écrans.” - President of MHAD - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

221 “Des routes, des trottoirs à refaire pour rendre la ville plus accueillante et arbres sur les trottoirs pour faire des allées vertes.” - Inhabitant - April 21st 2023 - Association meeting
small electrical cars with special lanes”222, “have plants that can glow in the dark for the pedestrians crossing”223, “take out the parking inside town”224.

Some of the ideas were also about cultural enhancement “have more walks with themes and more show-like walks”225, “do more workshops for children on the different old jobs that Montivilliers had”226, “try to open the monuments 24/7 so people can appreciate them another way”227, “have something in the abbey linked to movies and tv shows”228, “create a festival for the town”229, “do some street art guided tours”230, “a beer festival”231 which is an idea from the twinning linked to Germany.

To conclude, there are some ideas about the development of the town with “trying to analyse the development of Pont-Audemer”232 a town similar to Montivilliers, “think about the intangible heritage of Normandy traditional food with more restaurants”233, “do a tourism tour for the tourists coming from Le Havre to Étretat while going to the smaller towns of the CU”234, “create a camping because

222 “Petites voitures électriques avec des voix spécifiques pour emmener les gens.” - President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

223 “Des plantes qui s’allument la nuit pour les passages piétons.” - President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

224 “Je supprimerai le parking dans le centre ancien.” - President of MHAD - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

225 “théâtralisé la visite une solution comme les promenades à thème au Havre.” - Inhabitant - April 21st 2023 - Association meeting

226 “Faire des ateliers avec les jeunes avec des anciens métiers.” - Inhabitant - April 21st 2023 - Association meeting

227 “les bâtiments seraient ouverts 24h sur 24 parce que je pense qu’on peut aussi bien apprécier un monument la nuit.” - President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

228 “Utiliser des BD ou films.” - President of MHAD - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

229 “Créer un festival (...) sur Montivilliers.” - Former Mayor - April 30th 2023 - Montivilliers

230 “On aurait pu faire du Street Art (...) un parcours de Street Art.” - Former Mayor - April 30th 2023 - Montivilliers

231 “La fête de la bière.” - President of the Twinning - April 26th 2023 - Montivilliers

232 “prendre en compte une ville similaire comme Pont-Audemer.” - Inhabitant - April 21st 2023 - Association meeting

233 “Il faut des restaurants avec de la nourriture locale de la région.” - Inhabitant - April 21st 2023 - Association meeting

234 “Un circuit direct Étretat pour remonter vous faites Montivilliers et Le Havre.” - Former Mayor - April 30th 2023 - Montivilliers
Montivilliers as a lot of green areas". The town needs to deal with the heritage production challenges while listening to its inhabitants' ideas. They are already trying to do but their efforts need to continue. When you “put the puzzle together with all the elements that the town has, the town can become a pleasant tourist destination.”

Time and change lead to decision-making impacting heritage production. Indeed, making choices means keeping and leaving some of the heritage. In this case, preserving or maintaining heritage cannot be done at a specific moment in time. This intricate balance is pondered with the consequences of leaving a heritage aside such as decaying or insecurity. Challenges are arising. If there is a too strong homogenisation of the town through aestheticization, it can lead to gentrification and therefore push the inhabitants outside of their own town. This gentrification leads to an issue with youth and individualism which does not help the heritage production process and development as the local government and associations would have liked to. However, the inhabitants are full of ideas to make this development possible linked to sustainability, development and culture that can help Montivilliers in its decision-making and development process.

235 “Un camping devrait être créer à Monti car on a un espace vert.” - Inhabitant - April 20th 2023 - Thursday Market

236 “Quand on met tout le puzzle en route (devient) une belle ville touristique agréable.” - Former Mayor - April 30th 2023 - Montivilliers
8. Conclusion

Going through Montivilliers’ tourism plan and heritage production chronologically has helped to understand the different actions and challenges the community is navigating through. Indeed, implementing tourism was a major leap for the town but an evident choice when thinking about the town’s history as an influential commercial hub. This first tourism plan and abbey renovation were undertaken to bring more attractiveness while opening Montivilliers to the inhabitants. The first branding and promotion plan was created. Indeed, using significant themes from the mindscapes of the different actors from the community and visitors, helped Montivilliers’ identity while safeguarding the authenticity of the place.

Throughout the years following this first strategy, a transition within the community needed to occur to evolve not only as a community but for the different heritages as well. This evolution was made through adaption and heritage production. This heritage production used various techniques on the heritages, such as culturalization, adaptive re-use, renovation, stories and labels to enhance their heritage to put them more up-to-date. This evolution led to the discovery of a new type of heritage, the natural heritage promoted along with the town’s cultural heritage. Throughout this heritage production process, novelty is primordial for the community to stay motivated and proud of their tangible and intangible heritage so they can participate more in Montivilliers’ cultural actions and activities. However, challenges and issues can arise if the heritage production and tourism plan are unmanaged. Indeed, gentrification, degradation, decay and insecurity can result from this non-maintenance of some heritages and areas in town. Heritage production separates the different spaces: the city centre and the rest of the town. The tourism strategy does not help with this issue. But actions were undertaken by the local government and will probably be developed in the future.

The town is facing different dualities. Indeed, trying to operate through the past and present, the old and the new, the elderly and the youth brings up challenges the local government is already trying to face. But even within the tourism strategy, the target audience is a mix of families and gothic amateurs which are unalike, but similarities can always be found. These dualities are part of the town’s identity.

The different actors within the community have their own roles when talking about heritage production and community-based tourism. Indeed, the local government is the main instance who is making the decision, but the inhabitants must help with the choice through their knowledge of their place. Knowledge and Culture are some of the main aspects the town is transforming their tangible cultural heritage into. Indeed, these heritages have their proper stories, art and knowledge from different cultures can be learned helping the overall understanding of a place. Moreover, associations are helping the inhabitants and local government connect to bring more culture and knowledge to their town through participation in the town’s activities. This equilibrium must stay as much as possible to create trust within the community and make decisions more related to the town which helps in having a more sustainable. But sometimes, decisions have to be made and some of the town’s heritage can not stay for the evolution of the town.
8.1 Suggestions for Future Research

Montivilliers has a lot of associations, especially the sports ones, which were not interviewed. It would be relevant to have their perspectives.

Montivilliers cannot become a world heritage site as it is missing amenities like hotels and restaurants in the town centre to bring the tourists to stay but maybe in the future?

Further research on how tourists and inhabitants will interact and react to the abbey and the heritage reopening would be interesting to see if the tourism planning department also thought about the social media aspect of the branding process through heritage production.
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