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**PROJECT MARKETING FACING NEW INTERACTIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS
IN SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES**

Competitive paper

Abstract

This work begins with the observation that sustainability issues are playing an increasingly important role in the calls for tenders of public clients in the area of urban transport infrastructures. However, these issues are difficult to grasp because of the procurement procedure characteristics of these clients and large variations in the definition of the sustainability of projects. This research follows a constructivist project marketing approach, in which clients' demands, formulated in tender documents, are built upstream of their publication. The concept of milieu calls on project marketing to investigate territorial networks to understand project complexity and anticipate the requirements of the tender. As part of a three-year interaction with an industrial company in the transport sector, this work is based on four case studies of construction projects for urban transport infrastructures, to understand how the sustainability issues of complex projects are built in the milieu. The study was carried out through fifty interviews with a variety of actors in the projects and milieus. Actor-network theory was mobilized in the data analysis. The first contribution of the research is to reconsider the actors of sustainability issues in the milieu. The second contribution is to put in perspective the high level of uncertainty in the rules, norms and representations of sustainability in the four milieus studied, calling for new methods to better understand the construction of sustainability as a new challenge for project marketing.

Keywords: project marketing, milieu, stakeholders, sustainability issues.

INTRODUCTION

This work begins with the observation that the issues of sustainable development are playing an increasingly important role in the calls for tenders of public clients in the area of urban transport infrastructure. It has been observed that environmental issues and, more generally, sustainability issues could account for 10 to 20% of the award criteria of mega projects.

However, project marketing is facing an important and complex challenge: these issues are difficult to grasp because of the characteristics of the procurement procedures of these clients, particularly in Europe (Fisher, 2013; Uttam and Le Lann Roos, 2015), and the large variation in even defining the sustainability of projects (Gendron, 2007; Billaudot and Destais, 2009) as well as in the network of contributors to these issues (Rowley, 1997; Dontenwill, 2005; Roloff, 2008).

This research follows a constructivist project marketing approach (Cova and Hoskins, 1997), in which the demand formulated in the tender documents is built upstream of their publication. The concept of milieu (Cova, Mazet, and Salle, 1996) calls for project marketing to invest these territorial networks to understand project complexity and anticipate the requirements of the tender. Milieu is defined by Cova *et al.* (*ibid*) as “*a socio-configuration that can be characterized by four elements: a territory, a network of heterogeneous actors related to each other on this territory, a representation constructed and shared by these actors, a set of rules [the law of the milieu] regulating the actions between these actors*” (p. 654). The milieu concept is set up as a relevant unit of analysis in project marketing. It is separated from that of segment, which is a group of actors with uniform characteristics with no interaction between them. The milieu emphasizes heterogeneous actors and their interactions. The few works that deal with the link between milieu and sustainability issues in the project marketing literature (Carù, Cova, and Pace, 2004; Crespín-Mazet and Flipo, 2009; Pace, Calisti, Cova, and Salle, 2004) lead us to ask: How should we rethink the concept of milieu to understand the complexity of sustainable development as it emerges?

PRELIMINARY CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF STAKEHOLDER NETWORKS IN PROJECT MARKETING TO GRASP THE COMPLEXITY OF SUSTAINABILITY IN MEGA PROJECTS

Two dimensions are chosen to decipher the complexity of sustainability issues: the first is that of the actors involved in territorial networks and their role in terms of sustainability issues; the second is the set of rules, norms and constructed representations concerning the emergence of the sustainability issues of projects.

Actors part of the milieu: a recent opening for stakeholders

While most of the business-to-business (B2B) exchanges research, and particularly in the IMP Group field, addresses the links between customers, suppliers and their networks of economic actors, a new movement has been observed in industrial marketing centered on business networks towards stakeholders (see Freeman, 1984; Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Rowley, 1997; Frooman, 1999).

A stakeholder is defined as “*any group or individual who can affect or be affected by the achievement of organizational goals*” (Freeman, 1984, p. 46). According to Sharma (2001), the

integration of stakeholders should "*stimulate the creation of a knowledge-generating sustainability and improve sustainable performance and competitive benefits*" (p. 155). The link between social responsibility and stakeholders is not always explicit in the literature; it becomes clear with some authors such as Crouch (2006), who proposes defining corporate social responsibility (CSR) as follows: "*firms voluntarily assuming responsibility for their externalities, thereby setting the puzzle of how this can be reconciled with the maximization of shareholder value as the central challenge of the subject*" (p. 1533) and then states that "*CSR will be addressed via the following: [...] The operation of this analytical frame in the firm's relations with key groups with whom it has market relations (customers, investors, employees), and with those to whom it relates solely through externalities*" (p. 1534).

Esse *et al.* (2012) bring the concept of stakeholder closer to that of business networks in industrial marketing, highlighting reciprocal business relations. The main contribution of Ivens and Pardo (2010) is to state the necessity of taking the concept of externalities into account with behavior norms (harmonization with the social matrix), leading companies to adopt an approach based on stakeholder networks. Based on research into the development of new technology for improving approaches to road safety, Wilson *et al.* (2010) put into perspective the complexity of the relationships between stakeholders as part of a social partnership. These relationships are different from those usually studied by the IMP Group in terms of the types of problems and goals (societal implications) and involve stakeholders. Ryan *et al.* (2008) suggest an integrative model for sustainable industrial marketing, which includes, in a systems approach, the relationship between the system (including the environment), business networks, interorganizational dyads, direct business actors (suppliers and customers) and non-direct business actors (non-governmental organizations [NGOs]). Ritvala and Salmi (2010, 2012) have analyzed how NGOs mobilize business actors in networks based on values (in this case: reducing pollution in the Baltic Sea). Finally, in the project marketing field, Crespin-Mazet and Flipo (2009) emphasize that, to be ethical, marketing must (1) exceed the strict application of public procurement principles that lead to unfair business (unbalanced relationships between customers and suppliers, between the various suppliers involved in the business and the other project stakeholders); (2) replace market coordination mechanisms with coordination through partnerships and co-development involving the relevant stakeholders; and (3) take the common good into account in parallel with companies' individual interests, so that all stakeholders can benefit from a fair distributive justice.

Milieu and project' stakeholders: a dichotomous view

In project marketing, Cova, Crespin-Mazet and Salle, the founding authors of the concept of milieu in 1996, indicate that it is composed of the business actors (consultants, partners, financiers, agents, engineering firms, contractors, etc.) and non-business actors (governments, unions, lobbyists, pressure groups, activists, etc.) that form the context in which a project is built. The value of the milieu concept lies in recognizing the component actors' heterogeneity, but few works depict actors other than those in the purely economic sphere, thus excluding players dealing with project externalities (Freeman, 1984; Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Mitchell, Agle and Wood, 1997; Crouch, 2006; Achterkamp and Vos, 2008; Aaltonen and Kujala, 2010).

Thus, the emblematic case of Antolini (Cova *et al.*, 1996; Cova and Hoskins, 1997; Cova *et al.*, 2002; Cova and Salle, 2003), a construction company that wanted to enter the milieu of industrial facilities in the Loiret (an administrative department in central France), highlights the role played by two focal organizations of the milieu in the World Paper project development site : the Association for the Economic Development of Orléans (ADECO) and the Agency for

the Economic Development of the Loiret (ADEL). This case also focuses on peripheral players, such as the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Employers' Local Union (UPL) and the national employment agency (ANPE) and the French electricity supplier (EDF), which supported the project economically by an enhancement of local dynamism. One can also cite the case of Catalu (Cova *et al.*, 2000), a boat manufacturer with expertise in constructing oceanographic survey vessels, which was able to mobilize non-business actors such as scientists (the future users of the boat), giving them power in the decision process of the buying center (e.g., assistance in building a pitch). Similarly, cases analyzed by Skaates *et al.* (2002) Skaates *et al.* (2003) mobilize only economic actors. The case of Bechtel (Cova *et al.*, 2002) highlighted some actors other than those in the economic sphere. The business offer included a social dimension through Bechtel's collaboration with NGOs, local government and other leaders of local opinion, but this social dimension of the offer remained peripheral *vis-à-vis* the focal project of the building of a power plant.

In most of the research, if there is a "request for sustainability" which emanates from a milieu, it seems to be driven more by the actors called "societal actors", who speak in favor of the preservation of natural areas, as in the Bechtel case (*ibid*), in the waste management system of the city of Marseille (Cova *et al.*, 2002), or who speak in favor of the preservation of their livelihoods, as in the case SARL Le Stade (Pace *et al.*, 2004). Indeed, in response to the loss of legitimacy of political actors in the management of the common good, societal actors can "join" projects (Cova *et al.*, 2002). They are then called the "hidden actors of project networks", as opposed to the "visible actors of project networks" who are contractually involved in the project (such as customers, engineering firms, banks or other institutions). We then understand that marketing activities are differentiated between business actors (visible) and non-business actors (invisible).

Thus, we find the same dichotomy with respect to the concept of business and non-business actors in a milieu in project marketing, in the concept of primary and secondary stakeholders in strategic management (Freeman, 1984; Clarkson, 1995; Donaldson and Preston, 1995) and in project management (Aaltonen and Kujala, 2010; Achterkamp and Vos, 2008). In a contractualist logic, business actors are primary stakeholders of the project and have key objectives for its success, which are mainly economic in focus. Non-business or secondary actors, such as NGOs, labeling organizations, governments and other actors, such as regulators or the media, are mostly perceived of as risk or uncertainty carriers (or, in some rare cases, opportunity carriers). Actors who are to one side of the activity (users, customers outside the decision makers, and actors who are passively involved) receive less attention; while stakeholders beyond the project team are rarely considered (Achterkamp and Vos, 2008, p. 753). Authors in the field of sustainable development indicate that these stakeholders play an impetus role and are also considered the only vigilance vectors in project sustainability: "*the organizations of civil society are key players in the growth of universal values in the field of human rights, environment and labor standards*" (Igalens, 2003, p. 3).

For its part, industrial marketing has also taken an interest in non-business actors (Hadjikhani and Sjögren, 1995; Hadjikhani and Thilenius, 2005), with particular focus on political actors, insofar as they play a major role in the customer-supplier relationship, having a strong impact on the national and international economic activity of companies. Political actors can play three roles: resource control (e.g., controlling access to certain organizations), public policy (e.g., the creation of favorable conditions for trade) and as buyers (e.g., Project ownership of national or international projects) (Hadjikhani and Thilenius, 2005; Linné and Tsung-Ying Shih, 2013). In project marketing, political actors are generally considered to be non-business actors (Cova *et al.*, 2002, pp. 18, 35; Skaates *et al.*, 2002).

Table 1 summarizes the similarities in the strategic management, project management, industrial marketing and project marketing literature towards a dichotomous stakeholder approach.

	Stakeholders		Business and non-business actors	
Discipline	Strategic management	Project management	Industrial marketing	Project marketing
Key idea	It is necessary to take the impacting and impacted strategic project stakeholders into account.	A project operates in an environment in which it is necessary to take the stakeholders' associated risks into account in the development phase of the project (evolutionary dimension).	Business networks include a set of embedded actors (companies, competitors, suppliers, governments, sectoral groups) operating exchange relations.	A milieu consists of business and non-business actors. These actors belong to the same territory; they construct the rules governing the functioning of the milieu and the business that will develop within it.
Major typologies developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can affect, be affected (Freeman, 1984). • Emergency, legitimacy and power (Mitchell <i>et al.</i>, 1997). • Primary / secondary, Contractually / non contractually (Clarkson, 1995; Donaldson and Preston, 1995), • Degree of organizational and societal engagement (Girard and Sobczak, 2010, 2012). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary and secondary (Aaltonen and Kujala, 2010). • Stakeholders' roles (Missonier and Loufrani-Fedida, 2014). • Actively involved (clients, decision makers, designers), passively involved (Achterkamp and Vos, 2008). • Inside/outside of the project (Cova and Salle, 2005). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most significant political actors: governments and bureaucrats. • The presence of groups and unions (it is not clear whether the associations are part of it), Chamber of Commerce. • The media is sometimes cited but rarely discussed, except by Hadjikhani and Sjögren (1995). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business actors (central/value creators) and non-business actors (peripheral/non-value creators) in the milieu (Cova <i>et al.</i>, 1996; Cova and Salle, 2005). • Business actors, community and society, governmental actors/State (Skaates <i>et al.</i>, 2002). • Hidden actors in the milieu/social actors (Cova <i>et al.</i>, 2002; Cova and Salle, 2003).
Issues to the inclusion of non-business actors or secondary stakeholders	Stakeholder management to reduce risks in the company's strategic project.	Understanding and managing the stakeholders' behavior towards project success (anticipating opportunities and problems).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create barriers to entry and reduce uncertainties that non-business actors pose to the focal supplier-customer relationship (Hadjikhani and Thilenius, 2005). • Integrate ethical issues in business relationships (Ivens and Pardo, 2010). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate credibility for the company in the milieu - capacity to achieve the contract objective and to follow the rules of the milieu (Skaates <i>et al.</i>, 2003). • Support sleeping relationships (Skaates <i>et al.</i>, 2002). • Indirect lobbying action performed by non-business actors with business actors (Pace <i>et al.</i>, 2004). • Search for competitive advantage (Pace <i>et al.</i>, 2004).

Table 1: Similarities in dichotomies - taking into account stakeholders in strategic management, project management, industrial marketing and project marketing

The Milieu that shapes the common rules and representations between actors and stakeholders

When the concept of milieu was first being established in regional economics, Proulx (1994) defined an innovative milieu as "*a territory in which actors generate a cognitive collective process that creates a framework, a climate, an atmosphere or a culture with a social, political, cultural, technological, administrative and economic dynamism*" (p. 69). The author emphasized the learning dimension present in the milieu (to differentiate it from other concepts such as industrial district in particular) and the territorial synergy created from the process of collective territorial organization and a common identity. According to Proulx (1994), regional culture is a common identity: "*The territorial culture of a potential innovative milieu proves, in our view, a structural system of decision-making processes concerning the territorial community*" (p. 72) and "*the organizational component of culture on a local or regional territory is associated with the endogenous capacity of individuals to take charge collectively of their community's future and the organization of a living space as desired by and for the community*" (p. 73). In project marketing, milieu takes this perspective, with the idea that territory is both the receptacle and the support of relational capital, a local governance system, and a coordination mechanism. The common norms, rules and representations of milieus are produced through a process of collective learning enriched through the projects in the territory. Interconnections after interconnections, common norms, rules and representations are developed, which also constitute the creation of milieu criteria.

However, a description of the norms, rules and representations of milieus remains relatively rare in academic literature. In a case study of a Danish company wishing to set up in Germany, Skaates *et al.* (2002) provide examples (regulations in the construction sector, German construction standards, interpretation of the public procurement directives in the country, and mental representations of German actors) that Danish companies have had to learn (e.g., what do "high quality", "environmentally friendly" design, and "Nordic architecture" mean?). The authors emphasize, however, that contact with local stakeholders has been hard to implement due to difficulties in assimilating these representations and local norms. Skates *et al.* (2003) then offer relevant entry modes in milieus according to the situation encountered by the company (such as if the rules are already highly developed or, conversely, rather vague; if the business provider is recognized internationally or not, etc.). In general, however, the authors emphasize the need to develop work on these norms, rules and common representations and the process of their construction: "*Differences in the interpretation of supra- and international public tendering rules vary substantially from country to country [...]. Thus, in order to create general rules about when a certain posture is most suitable, we need more information about variations in interpretive frameworks and norms as well as better theories about the construction of common meaning in inter-organizational settings*" (Skaates and Tikkanen, 2000, p. 11). This call came in the 2000s (Skaates and Tikkanen, 2000, 2003) but there is still, 15 years later, little research on these issues.

METHODOLOGY

This research is based on four case studies (Dubois and Gadde, 2002) of urban infrastructure construction projects by French local authorities: Doria, Aravis, Levanna and Turia. The objective was to understand how to build sustainability into a tramway project and, more specifically, in the client request to the railway equipment manufacturer. Figure 1 gives an overview of the empirical framework undertaken.

	Doria	Aravis	Levanna	Turia
Project description	2 first tramway lines	2 first tramway lines	Modernization of the subway system	New tramway line C
Temporality of the transport projects regarding our interviews	Past	Past	Future	Future
Number of inhabitants (= size of the conurbation and structure of the transport networks)	250 000	100 000	2 millions	700 000
Perceived maturity of local sustainability	+	~	+	-
Interviews	12	13	8	13

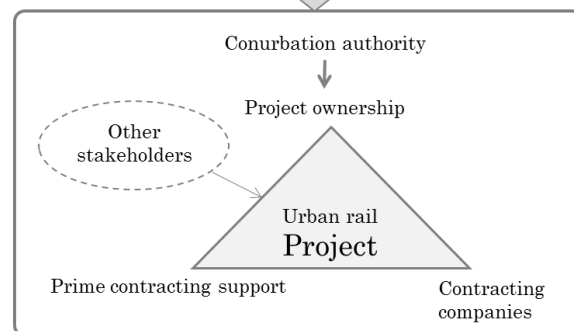


Figure 1: Empirical framework of the research

Thus, for each case study, the aim was to meet actors and other rail project stakeholders which have played a direct role (the promotion of sustainability, definitions of requirements, etc.) or have been linked to sustainability issues (by affecting the project or being affected by the project). For each case, interviews were held with the following individuals. (1) Actors in the conurbation authority and project management, both political actors (transport and sustainability elected representatives) and technical officials (e.g., project managers within project management teams with responsibility for rolling stock acquisition, and a sustainability manager where there was one), and administrators (e.g., procurement directors). (2) It was necessary to include prime contracting support, which is a central actor in urban infrastructure project design. This mainly meant interviewing the project manager (and a recently appointed sustainability manager in one case). (3) The system operator, because this constituted the first "user" and also presented a major interest. Other companies participating in the project were also interviewed, depending on the cases. (4) Representatives of user interest associations were sought in each case. Other stakeholders' spokespeople were sought according to the specific issues identified locally (e.g., an association of persons with reduced mobility [PRM] - Disability Access - for the Aravis case; and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] in the case of Turia). Furthermore, five collective interviews were completed with individuals at ITC (with the French Sales Department Director, a business developer, a tender leader and the Sustainability Director), a railway equipment manufacturer interested in these four projects.

Data were processed by following a four-step approach: the development of a coding framework (built from analysis of the tender documents) and, next, data reduction (through the coding of 900 pages of interview transcripts from the case studies). The theoretical development was then achieved through actor-network theory (Callon, 1986, 1991; Latour, 2004, 2005). The fourth step was a cross-case analysis and a return to the project marketing literature.

CASES - EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS

Singularity of sustainability networks

This first part of the results and analysis focuses on local stakeholders and puts into perspective the common rules and representations of the sustainability within milieus.

Non-business actors at the heart of projects

From the Aravis tramway project (the construction of a new tramway network consisting of two lines) a surprising observation was made (Siggelkow, 2007) regarding the consideration of business and non-business actors upstream of a project. This phenomenon concerns the mobilization of various stakeholders in relation to the issue of persons with reduced mobility (PRM).

Box 1: Aravis and the issue of persons with reduced mobility (PRM)

The Aravis region is known to be suitable for people with reduced mobility. Moreover, young people with disabilities who were born and educated in Mirantin, the nearby metropolis of 850,000 inhabitants, leave it to find a more acceptable lifestyle in Aravis. Much suitable infrastructure exists, such as living centers, professional centers (ESAT), health facilities (Aravis was one of the first communities in the region to open to open a satellite of the Departmental House for Disabled Persons (MDPH) and specialized centers. More than 130 PRM associations were created to strengthen ties between PRM and the various structures.

Meanwhile, Aravis leads a strong policy on PRM. The social meaning of sustainability in public policies is reflected in the transport field in the motto: "accessibility for all". Beyond the issue of free admission (accessibility for all budgets), the issue of the prevention of mobility is from a political point of view, clearly identified (as accessibility for PRM). The conurbation authority could boast that the downtown area was 100% accessible even before the 2015 deadline imposed by the Disability Act of 2005. Associations stress the important work done by the Inter-municipal Accessibility Commission, particularly upon the drawing up of the official Plan named Accessibility in Public Transport (APT) in 2008. Elected representatives of local government are active in this milieu, with a dedicated elected official, Ms JAM, in charge of movement and accessibility. Note that another individual with restricted mobility is also elected to this body. Strong links have developed through time and projects between associations, Inter-municipal Accessibility Commission agents and elected officials (e.g. in the development of APT, in the urban area PRM policy, and through the constitution of focus groups). PRM associations are also accustomed to working with Trimerso, the delegated operator of the transmission network for Aravis, to improve the local bus service.

In addition, during the construction project of the railway network in Aravis, these different types of actors mobilized on the issue of PRM. Associated actors, whose "Handicap Path 360", actively promoted demand for project adaptation with respect to PRM issues by federating the various types of disability, associated structures and thus needs. Their participation took the form of support for the project in the public inquiry and for obtaining the Declaration of Public Utility (a letter to the Investigating Commissioner), through participation in the "tram workshop" (particularly the sessions on adapting rolling stock), but also through field visits, various tests and a visit to the industrial site of a railway constructor.

In Aravis, political actors have shown a desire to consult with specialized associations, whereas in other cities the complexity of the dialogue is more apparent (e.g. a power struggle between associations). Mr DF, elected to be in charge of transport in the conurbation authority and Mayor of Aravis, actively focused upon the needs of PRM (which resonated with his social policy for the city of Aravis), both in his policy communication and in the expression of the need to design rolling stock. He was echoed by Ms JAM.

The prime contracting support, a technical actor in the buying network, usually translates customer needs into technical criteria for project development, but has not, paradoxically, played a major role either in rolling stock tenders, or more generally in the project (the PRM requirements were standard). The translation of the PRM associations' demand was made directly between the

technicians of the project owner (Mr BR, Project Manager) and the technicians of the rolling stock manufacturer (after the consultation process).

The Aravis case offers a wealth of learning opportunities for the concept of milieu in the context of complex projects. This case highlights the singular context of a net of associations (educational, professional, health, etc.) around PRM issues in Aravis. The case shows that these non-business actors are actually active at the heart of the project and not only at its periphery: support for project management, co-designing the project (in their area of interest), and supplanting, moreover, the role of translating sustainability assigned to the prime contracting support. Indeed, the prime contracting support was mandated, through Mr JA, to translate sustainability into different parts of the project. For the PRM issue, the prime contracting support contented itself with reminding the law (i.e. having a gap of 5 cm between the platform and the rolling stock), while the associations went further, negotiating a gap of 3 cm. According to Mr BR, the Project Manager for the project ownership: *“We stayed on basic things. Providing a gap of 5 cm is standard. We must know, we have no right to do less!”* (Interview on 06/01/2014, p. 8).

Beyond the substantial involvement of PRM associations can also be observed different actor types - political, administrative and technical – which supported PRM issues in the milieu and in the project. This is to say that if our ‘program’ was to analyze the role of ‘secondary stakeholder’s projects’, PMR associations played a role, but they were however not alone. Dreveton (2011) explains, through actor-network theory (ANT), that irreversibility is achieved by two kinds of actors. The first are called project “promoters”: they organize the translation process leading to the creation of an innovation. Convergence between network members is achieved through the actions of the actors called “translators”: they seek the necessary consensus for the innovation building in the network. Thus, it can be observed in this study that “society actors” played the role of promoters in parallel with that of the political actors. This was not confined to simple communication about issues they usually support. They engaged in creating irreversibility (e.g. political messages regarding accessibility for all in the project, and the announcement of the creation of two PRM seats at the opening of “Tramway House”). Other milieu actors, such as regulatory stakeholders, also played a promoter role through the Disability Act, on which political and civil society actors relied to push their interest in the project. Administrative and technical actors, meanwhile, played the role of translators, enacting the promoters’ expectations in terms of policy frameworks (e.g. APT) and in technical terms (e.g. prescriptions taking into account the adjustments required in the design of rolling stock).

ANT (Latour, 2005) provide a productive analytical framework for understanding the stakeholder networks in project marketing in this study in order to grasp the complexity of sustainability in mega projects. It is known that actors operating alone outside a network cannot act effectively. Beyond the existence of many PRM-specialized structures in the milieu, this paper maintains that it is their connection and their networking capacity, not only among themselves with the creation of local dynamics, but also with conurbation authority actors (elected officials and administrative staff) and project management, which supported the translation and emergence of sustainability. The tramway in Aravis shows that non-business actors are particularly bound to the territory. The construction of the network, outside any project opportunity, is the result of years of actors’ collaboration on many projects, including those concerned with mobility. The solidification of the network upstream of the project was an important first irreversibility, and built a network of indispensable actors for the project. The proactivity of associations, including that of Handicap Path 360 (a federation of more than one hundred associations and professional bodies and health organizations), their credibility and their capacity to contribute to projects, enabled the project management to integrate them with a great degree of fluidity into the project.

Emergence of unusual actors

A second surprising fact (Siggelkow, 2007) was also observed in the Turia tram project, regarding the consideration of business and non-market actors upstream of a project. This phenomenon was the emergence of unusual actors mobilized around the issue of Turia Canal Revitalization.

Box 2: Turia and the emergence of canal-related actors

The construction of a new tramline in Turia occurred in a specific context, namely that of its location near a canal listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

While in rural areas the Turia Canal is a tourist issue because of the beauty of the surrounding landscape, in towns it becomes less attractive (due to urbanization and pollution generated by people on the margins of society), which necessitates a re-appropriation of public space and a restructuring of the urban space around the canal. Given the UNESCO ranking, the canal must again become a showcase for the city and its projects. The projects, including the new Tramline C, must also meet the expectations of a UNESCO World Heritage Site, classified under the law on the Monuments Act of 1930.

For the design and construction of the future line C of the tram network, the project management (project ownership), named Turia-CDR, is facing new players. Notably, the presence of a particular economic actor, i.e. VNF (the French navigable waterways organization) as the site owner. This public organization's role is the maintenance of the frontage of the canal and the way it functions and a major challenge lies in the preservation of the economic activity of the canal (rental companies, restaurants, etc.). The special situation of the project in relation to the UNESCO ranking has also led Turia-CDR to question the specific procedures for implementing and thus to order diagnoses from the DREAL (the regional environment directorate). Indeed, beyond the production of the standard environmental impact reports/assessments (i.e. by DREAL) to obtain ministerial approval of the project, the presence of these government actors appears peculiar. Other DREAL services (Mr JLR is a sites inspector, Ms KB is responsible for the UNESCO Mission) could intervene in the project (with a capacity for effective action), as well as other actors involved in the management of the canal (The "canal pole" : DDT, the ABF and VNF as part of the departmental pole that has an expert role with the state), or its immediate environment (SNCF, RFF, etc.).

The project management (Turia-CDR) has identified these new players, even if they are not yet active. They raise new questions and thoughts (such as the landscape integration of the project), which could lead to particular characteristics of the project in terms of sustainability.

The case of the Turia tramline highlights a new configuration for the companies that will be involved in the project, with the canal listed as a UNESCO Heritage site near the tramway project. Indeed, the recommendations made by UNESCO through DREAL or the intervention of the canal pole, are *a priori* additional interactions for the project management, a type of engagement that had not taken place in other construction sites in Turia or even in other cities or projects. Therefore, *a priori*, it is not the case that actors would be in direct contact with the companies involved; however, the actors can influence the project management and therefore, the demand for sustainability (e.g. grassed platforms, an autonomous power supply, etc.). Project marketing should indeed understand the expectations of these unusual actors. Companies involved in complex projects interact regularly with some government actors (e.g. DREAL). However, we are speaking here of actors (individuals) outside the usual scope. Further, the nature of companies' economic issues could make it difficult to have direct access to these actors, whose mission is not necessarily focused on dialogue with the companies involved in projects.

On the other hand, it should also be stressed that these economic and government actors do not necessarily seem to be visible in the current approach to the environment. It should be recalled that milieu is delimited (Michel *et al.*, 2000) on a geographic dimension (here Turian territory) and a functional dimension (in this case the development of an urban rail network). The milieu is progressively constructed through the projects in the territory. Here there is an example of

an already established milieu (Turia is a large urban area, with recurring transport network project development and an organizational configuration structured on public transport), in which new players can intervene given the new configuration of the project.

While the actors responsible for the production of environmental impact studies at DREAL can, in fact, be identified in the milieu, because they are generally involved in projects of this nature, site inspectors and the person responsible for the UNESCO Mission are among the unusual players in these kinds of projects. They themselves, however, have not yet taken a decided position on the nature of their involvement in this project. The identification of these unusual actors was facilitated by actor-network theory, which allows non-human actors (if they are "acting" in a specific project) to be taken into account, by virtue of the concept of the actant (Callon, 1986). The canal can be considered an actant because it impels reflections and initiates action (in this case from its many representatives, whether VNF, the canal Pole, UNESCO or DREAL, etc.). Indeed, following the constraints and specificities of the canal, it is possible to identify the relevant stakeholders and analyze the impact of various characteristics of the project C with respect to sustainability.

While the typologies which were developed to analyze company, project or milieu stakeholders, and a typology developed by Lindbloom *et al.* (in Skaates *et al.*, 2002) that proves to be more detailed in project marketing, are useful for identifying the "*a priori* actors" involved, they do not allow further understanding of the different actors in the milieu who actually participate in the emergence of sustainability in a project. These typologies, frozen in their role of reality simplification, must be adapted to local contexts. Here, the idea is defended that, as well as understanding the issues of sustainability in complex projects, we must overcome the dichotomy of typologies mainly based on contractualist logic.

The cases presented here show that contexts, projects, and the actors involved are always singular. Non-business actors can play a central role in the emergence of sustainability issues within projects. Both of the illustrations cited above emphasize the construction of a network. Beyond the presence of the different types of actors in the milieu, project marketing must be mindful of networking ability and the ability to create convergence and irreversibility. This networking activity between sustainability stakeholders can occur prior to a project (in a prepared, active or typical milieu) or built during the project (as a distinctive feature).

Issues raised by few shared rules and representations in terms of sustainability within a milieu

The research question also calls for project marketing to conduct studies on milieu as an institutionalization process of common norms and values. This research reveals two surprising results.

Low norms and representations on the interpretation of sustainability

The first observation made from the analysis of the four cases reveals a low degree of common norms and representations within milieus concerning the interpretation and operationalization of "sustainability" in transport projects. In a generic sense, there is no real consensus among the actors interviewed on what "sustainable purchasing" is (the purchase of services and construction works), and *vis-à-vis* rolling stock acquisition in particular. There is also no consensus on the interpretation of public procurement directives, which are very complex in this field (Fisher, 2013; Uttam and Le Lann Roos, 2015).

Variance can also be observed in the project actors' vision and other sustainability stakeholders (Rumpala, 2010).

This variance emerges but is nuanced according to the case. This section presents the cases in turn, first addressing Doria and Levanna, then Aravis and, finally, Turia, which is considered the most varied.

Box 3: Doria, a broad vision, relatively integrated and with a policy of sustainability

A political display of sustainability emerged in the Doria conurbation with the first Mayoral mandate of Mr FR in 2001. He then placed urban ecology at the heart of city infrastructure projects (e.g. renovation of the waste incineration plant, creation of a "home of environment", etc.) and is now recognized by various awards (the Golden Marianne for sustainability, the Green Ticket of the FNAUT users' association, etc.). By being the spokesperson of a population demanding sustainability, Mr JPM, elected to be in charge of urban ecology, engages himself in a role of promoting sustainable development,¹ through the establishment of successive "clicks" that will generate common representations.²

While this convergence appears to be "planted", this common understanding is challenged by Ms OCH, Head of the Urban Ecology Department of the conurbation authority, who highlights the lack of interdisciplinarity in the operationalization of sustainability.³ Mr SG, Project Management Director, states that the attention of the teams in a project, such as the construction of a new tram network **with the attendant difficulty** of the collective purchase of rolling stock, **is focused much more** on the technical aspects **and less** on sustainability, for which he had, personally, no real interest⁴.

Box 4: Levanna, an avant-gardist vision of sustainability in the milieu and a pragmatic project positioning

The Metropolis of Levanna, whose economic development act on the European level, is positioned as a land of incubation and experimentation, both in sustainable development (with a number of eco-efficient innovation projects) and transportation (e.g. it is a pioneer in the autopilot system). The size of its transport network has allowed its management to develop experience, and allows it to project a long-term vision for the network. As such, energy conservation and purchases over the long term, are concerns shared in the political area (of political elected from different party), technical (research methods for translating political vision), economic (local companies engaged in industrial innovation

¹ "In the district commissions, environmental issues have become significant in these commissions. That is to say, there are more and more projects that fall within the environment; we have moved from cleanliness in front of their house [...] to: I set about doing shared garden projects, I begin improvement projects squares, here. And so, it contributes to a background noise here since there is a demonstration because it is the people who propose. So there is a demonstration that this is a concern" (Mr JPM, interviewed on 22 February 2013).

² "Here, successive political acts, successive political commitments mean that it is a real basis for progress. [...] All that, it is built brick after brick. I was talking about population and feedback and ... all must be placed, built. And finally, I state that, in five years of this exercise, as Deputy and then 12 years as Vice President, is that ultimately, it is less and less complicated. Because over the years, the scheme eventually feeds itself somehow. [...] There is a demand that is created, you answer and it works. So it generates other demands and so on. And suddenly, you enter the normal mode of operations of the community who said it is a concern, part, like the rest, like any other concern, the city must be clean" (Mr JPM, interviewed on 22 February 2013).

³ "Conurbation authority have to prove that they incorporate a sustainability approach into their public procurement. There are certainly progressing things, but I think we have to slowly progress and to seek to save a lot of energy of working people. The second brake we have seen here is that the purchasing policy is distributed to the different departments. And it's very difficult to integrate a sustainability approach, while in another conurbation authority, purchases are a special department. Here, departments are alone involved in their own markets, that why it is more difficult to integrate criteria in public procurement" (Mrs OCH, interviewed on 21 February 2013).

⁴ "It was part of the displayed criteria: sustainability criteria. It was in that market, it must have 10% of the criteria related to sustainable development, either positive discrimination or recyclability or other things etc. //FR: Okay. So in terms of recycling process, do you know what becomes of your tram in 30 years? // SG: I don't care [whispering and insisting on the form used]. [...] I will be gone. I leave it to others" (Mr SG, interviewed on 21 February 2013).

projects) and associative circles. However, operationally, including the rolling stock acquisition for the subway renovation project, Mr JMT, Procurement Director of Systema, Mr PG, responsible for rolling stock, and Mr BZ, Project Manager for Syloec (as project management assistance), address more strenuously the risks and ambivalences regarding the integration of sustainability into tendering for suppliers, and adopt a classical vision of sustainability in public procurement.

The cases of Doria and Levanna show a political will to build common sustainability norms and representations in the territory: for Doria to turn to urban ecology, and for Levanna to move towards innovation and an economic vision based on the long term. These representations are shared evenly among the stakeholders interviewed, both inside and outside the buying network and milieu. However, these representations are also put to the test in the complex projects and practices of different services, where they do not always seem to "percolate" into the client's demands as revealed in the contract documents for the businesses. This is, therefore, an issue for project marketing, which could lead to a misunderstanding between the political messages and the sustainability signals expressed in the tenders.

The two following cases mark a milieu with a divergence of views that is even more pronounced.

Box 5: Aravis, strong common representations on PRM issues, but not on sustainable development in general

Aravis set "accessibility for all" and the social pillar of sustainable development at the center of its transport policy. Box 1 described the porting of the PRM issue in the milieu and in a tramway network construction project. The result of these many PRM stakeholder issues is a strong common representation in the territory, particularly regarding the level of accessibility for PRM mobility. However, positions were less divided regarding the sustainability adopted in its global dimension. Mrs JL, Sustainable Development Director of the conurbation authority (the single example in the cases studied in which the Sustainable Development Director of the conurbation authority area had been working closely with the project management, given the proximity of the two entities), has been ruled out of the project due to a high level of expectation regarding sustainability, which was incompatible with the representations of the project management. Meanwhile, given the importance of the scale of a project to build a tramway network in a city the size of Aravis, the largest disappointment felt by Mrs CH, elected to be in charge of sustainable development and energy, is not to have been able to infuse the necessary crossover in the project officials (politicians and technicians), unlike other projects in the metropolitan area (e.g. the construction sector).

Box 6: Turia, low number of common representations on sustainability

The Turia agglomeration is known for the weight of support traditionally given to car users and little political backing for sustainable development. Actors including Turia-CDR, the project ownership, and businesses in the milieu associate sustainable development with the tensions that arose in the previous project (Line B): following the political impetus for sustainable development in this project (a popular issue in the 2008 municipal elections), disagreements arose in relation to project management leading, for all the actors involved, to a general loss of interest, disappointment and resentment. Furthermore, while assistance with project management dedicated to sustainable development had been hired on Line B Project to structure the process, there was still a lack of confidence in the sustainability tools associated with rail infrastructure projects. For example, a carbon footprint can still be seen in its premises, from the standpoint of the ability of companies to respond and their experience on certain topics (e.g. the inability to realize the full relevant scope, the issue of the calculation of the grey energy in cement, etc.). Opinions about sustainability integration in the draft Line C project vary, from those beliefs and practices in project management which are wedded to/fixed on a will to continue to those which show an inability to do so, and a great distrust *vis-à-vis* public procurement regulations or the actors previously involved no longer believing in this type of approach.

The Aravis and Turia cases reveal a low number of common norms and representations on sustainability as a cross-sector cooperation and global approach. The Turia case is where the variance is most pronounced between strong political commitment on a past project but absent on the current project; a project management with different views, with project management

assistance and companies which recall the de-escalation of commitment on the past project. The controversy about Project B could limit the sustainability demands on Project C. While the literature emphasizes the collective production of a local synergy, it is noted that sustainability has not yet acquired the local maturity to generate a synergy between actors. Sometimes, sustainable development is used as a driving force for some disputes (such as Line B in Turia).

A lack of coordination on the rules of sustainable development

The second finding is the lack of coordination on the rules of sustainable development, whether in the buying center, the buying network, or the milieu.

First, it must be remembered that one of the buying center characteristics, as part of complex projects, is to be extremely fragmented (Cova *et al.*, 2002), with buying functions distributed across an inter-organizational network (Owusu and Welch, 2007). This creates complexity in purchasing decisions, from the phase of the emergence of a need to the conclusion of the contract. As described by Owusu and Welch (2007), actors' roles change as and when a project progresses. Project managers move from a preparer role in the upstream phase towards a buyer role in the consultation phase; political actors also move from a project sponsor role towards a decision-maker role in the choice of suppliers. The coordination of procurement activities emerges through time with the process of the institutionalization of routines. However, these four cases highlight, in contrast, a lack of coordination mechanisms for sustainability between the main actors at the buying center⁵ and sustainability expert resources, where they exist: Aravis has a sustainability director in the conurbation authority, knowing that, given its small size, there is *a priori* proximity between project management and the conurbation authority. The conurbation of Doria has an urban ecology service, but it was developed after the consultation stage of the rail project. Levanna has a sustainability director in the conurbation authority but, given the large size of the conurbation and the structuring of project ownership (a permanent structure), the distance between the two institutions makes a coordinated relationship difficult. Systema, which has project ownership of the transport network of Levanna, has no sustainable development service. Finally, Turia has a configuration similar to Levanna in its size and in its structure in terms of transport, while Turia-CDR, which has project ownership for the development of the network, has no sustainable development service within it.

Mrs CH, elected to be in charge of sustainable development within the conurbation of Aravis, regrets not being able to establish coordination mechanisms between transport and sustainable development services,⁶ while Mrs JL, Sustainable Development Director for the conurbation authority, did not want or could not adopt the codes of the railway sector and maintain links with the buying center.⁷ Mr JPM, elected to be in charge of urban ecology in Doria, has *a priori*

⁵ In this case, it is understood that this is mainly in the buying center: political actors who are elected to be in charge of transport, technical actors in project ownership, including the project manager and other technical staff, and the administrative actors who are the legal directors.

⁶ "You still have to know that this way of teamwork is very fragmented. One does not... what I have regretted during my mandate... we tried but we didn't ... I think it will slowly happen... I hope a better cross-sector cooperation in teams. [...] So I explained it because, at the team level, we each have our delegations and our operational modes. The mayor also hoped that each elected representative has a delegation. So either it's a full delegation... because in my case I have sustainability - environment and sustainability, very broad. But I tried to make the crossover, to get others to be able to say: 'For some things, you can work differently'. It has not worked" (Mrs CH, interviewed on 9 January 2014).

⁷ According to Mr JA, who is in charge of engineering studies of sustainable development in the prime contracting support company Ferris for the project in Aravis: "We had a sustainable development person in front of us [note: Mrs JL, Head of Sustainable Development in the conurbation authority] who didn't know the tramway, so that

only intervened as a tender reviewer, but not upstream. No rule specifies when to intervene, including in the phase of project start (e.g. definition of needs); Ms OCH, Head of the Urban Ecology Department at Doria, highlighted the difficulty of promoting transversal initiatives in these silo organizations.⁸ Mr OL, Project Manager of the project management assistance on Project B in Turia, stated that Turia-CDR failed to overcome the difficulties in drafting its Sustainability Charter;⁹ it is also important to underline the reluctance of Mrs JR, Head of the Legal Division for Turia-CDR, regarding the integration of sustainability in tenders because of regulatory risks.

In the conurbation of Levanna, there is no coordination between the Sustainable Development Department and that of Systema; moreover, the technical and administrative actors at Systema indicate the missing tools and operating rules for implementing sustainable development.¹⁰ These missing elements are consistent with the work of Oruezabala and Rico (2012), who point out that buyers, in sometimes lacking legitimacy, must first “sell” their solutions internally. Sustainability brings additional complexity to the purchasing process and there is no coordination of the rules that could reduce the complexity in the operationalization of sustainable projects.

Owusu and Welch (2007) also suggest that the coordination of procurement activities does not occur outside the buying network as a whole: “*The buying center extends beyond a single organization's boundaries to incorporate all organizations that contribute to the buying decision process, even if they are not directly involved in supplier selection*” (p. 148).

The authors cite four types of member of the buying network: consultants and main contractors, governments (who are directly involved in the contracts and/or the regulator, guarantor, etc.), previous clients (e.g. used as references) and financial organizations (banks, lending agencies, etc.). This paper focuses its attention on consultants, namely engineering, to the extent that the other categories of actors have not played a major role in the integration of sustainability in the project and in the tenders studied.

perhaps she hadn't in mind that the conurbation authority didn't have the money for a tram. In summary, she wanted natural stone. But natural stone is what costs the most. And she wanted local natural stone on excessive m²” (Mr JA, interviewed on 13 January 2014).

⁸ “*We have to work on tenders. I would say it's a bit of our weakness today. It's hard it depends a lot on the department's ability to integrate sustainability. It is a little bit of a complicated area. There is a Procurement Department. For us [note: at the Urban Ecology Department] it is the responsibility of the Procurement Department to learn and professionalize itself on these matters, especially because there are legal obligations” (Mrs OCH, interviewed on 21 February 2013).*

⁹ “*It was on the Turia-CDR Charter, since Turia-EPIC has one. Well, now, we tried to work on it. And then it took a long time to finally be unsuccessful. [...] Well, this is where we began to see the problems and that it was very complicated” (Mr OL, interviewed on 22 May 2013).*

¹⁰ “*I very often have conversations with project managers when developing our specifications, [...] particularly on the subject of the tender documents (consultation rules) ... Conversations which say: It is absolutely necessary that we reflect on concrete criteria, on items that we ask to candidates, that stick as much as possible to the problems linked to the subject matter of the contract, to conditions for its execution, its features, its technical expertise, its on-time achievements, everything you can imagine. But I don't have the answer. I just have the thread and I just have the ability to translate our requirements, with them, into reality. And that's why I say the component you are interested in [note: sustainability], we still should have an upstream expertise in project management to be able to translate it correctly, I would say 'customized' ... It is customized relative to the subject matter of the contract and characteristics for: how far you go, how you take it, and that's why I said earlier, for me, there is a profession, in itself, that should identify the subjects in relation to the question and principle and must, I would say, gradually in specifications and in technical parts of the project, go like this, each time injecting them into each component. So we may have an interesting response in the prime contracting support!” (Mr JMT, interviewed on 15 January 2014).*

Engineering, as prime contracting support, is central to the translation of transport issues into technical requirements. While Mr PG, in charge of rolling stock acquisition for Systema, relies primarily on prime contracting support to consider the integration of sustainable development in the project, since it must itself deal with the complexity of the project, ITC actors state, conversely, that prime contracting support is not willing to integrate sustainability requirements in tenders as it generates costs and additional risks for them:

Mr Page [tender leader at ITC]: *“Prime contracting support are companies that have to make money, they have know-how and a number of documents in reserve. They have an interest in replicating the project. If they have to change as little as possible, it is better. So that, if one goes through to make sustainable development and change a number of the generic documents of the prime contractors, from what I understood and including on the Aravis case, because they had money problems on this project, so the variants, they did not want to hear about it, given that if they have to evaluate an alternative, it means a new study and a new study means money. So it’s like a snake biting its tail. Somewhere prime contracting support has more or less interest in seeking something near what it already has in its specifications. And moreover if the specification is exactly the same as [Town 1] or [Town 2] or whatever you want, it’s even better for him.”* // Mr Fideh [sales department director] notes: *“Every time we pass through an intermediary called Ferris, or Atsro. They want to take money and take less risk”* // Mr Page: *“They say they want to innovate, but when we innovate, we offer something different from what they offer, they never want it!”* // Mr Page: *“Ferris, if they heard it they would say: No, this is not innovation that we block, it’s your innovation that doesn’t interest me. They might respond like that to me. This is not because we are ITC, we are omniscient and know everything.”* // Mr Fideh: *“No, they would say: You hamper me by providing differentiating element because we have to be able to appreciate the offers, that’s why you we create a problem”* (Collective interview at ITC, on 08 July 2014).

In can, then, be noted that the project ownership tends to rely on the prime contracting support for the mission of coordinating sustainability in projects, while the prime contractors are constrained by business rules imposed by project ownership (to minimize the cost of engineering studies) in a small competitive sector.

Finally, emerging from the project network, that is to say more widely in the milieu, it can be highlighted that sustainability coordination rules are still little discussed in the literature. It is recognized that the four projects studied must conduct public inquiries and consultations, given that historically, French environmental law has strengthened consultation practices. Consultation practices provide space for institutionalized dialogue, in which norms and common representations can and should be able to be expressed. In this case, consultation is an important phase of projects, mainly politically, giving the backing of the population for the project. Thomassian (2004) points out that the consultation process involves a change in negotiation culture by officials (technicians, including project managers) and elected representatives.

Thus, Doria and Aravis, with the creation of the "Tramway workshop", show a willingness to progress in participatory democratic practice (a politicians-technicians-citizens triptych in the Aravis case and the constitution of several workshops in the case of Doria). In Aravis, one notices the strong intervention of PRM associations during the public inquiry and the Tramway workshop. In Turia, the Line C Project is certainly still in an upstream stage and the consultation is not yet done, but it is understood that the Line B Project showed significant challenges (the creation of a residents’ association and retail traders against the project, resulting in the work being halted by the administrative court, then the dismissal of this judgment by the State

Council and the resumption of work). Thus, how a consultation is designed, piloted, operationalized and monitored is used to inform project marketing of some of the coordination rules in the milieu (degree of population mobilization, permeability between the buying center and the milieu, etc.).

While this space allows stakeholders to express themselves in an institutionalized framework, as Diemer (2012) stated in recalling the participation principle in sustainable development approaches, dialogue leads, most of the time, to marginal changes in projects because the fundamental decisions are taken upstream of this phase:¹¹ "*Sustainable development is inconceivable unless accompanied by an ongoing debate framework on major economic and social challenges*" (ibid, p. 18). Moreover, participation is generally limited to those who are available (e.g. the elderly). Finally, the concerns raised in public consultations focus on the everyday elements of citizens' lives (line route, impacts of works on local residents and retail traders, etc.). One can even say that there was no expression of concern about the sustainable approach of the project issued in the consultation.

Finally, out of the consultation process, it was observed that non-business actors could take over the project, and vice versa, and that business actors could solicit other milieu stakeholders. Different coordination rules were observed. The first is collaboration between the sustainability stakeholders and the buying center installed at the time, characterized by a permeability between the different "worlds", with a number of connections in various forms (e.g. funding local structures, policy agenda, commitments, etc.). The Aravis case and its PRM stakeholders illustrate this coordination rule. The second rule relates to the temporary or exceptional interactions raised by a new issue emerging in the milieu. This is illustrated by the emergence of new actors concerned with reclaiming urban space within the Line C Project along the Turia Canal. Case-by-case management seems to have been set up (e.g. a demand for a diagnosis of case-specific procedures). Systema, which appears to have little relationships with external stakeholders, could possibly also be in this case, for example by being forced to deal with new issues. The third coordination rule is the milieu invocation by the buying center. Doria illustrates that sustainability requirements that are rooted in the local territory appear to be dominant requirements (e.g. the introduction of clauses for inclusion through economic activity, recovering water from below a former car park and using it to water the grassed platforms, the rehabilitation of former SNCF workshops to utilize them as warehouses – the ecological showcase for the project – etc.). It is also suggested here that the three coordination rules highlighted are not exclusive of each other.

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND IMPLICATIONS

The main contribution of the paper is the reconsideration of the actors of sustainability issues in the milieu. The existing actor and stakeholder typologies of the milieu (Cova *et al.*, 2002; Cova and Salle, 2003, 2005; Skaates *et al.*, 2002) were limited to comprehending those involved in sustainability issues. First, some non-business actors were central in the projects studied through their investment in sustainability issues, while they remain relegated to the status of peripheral project actors in most of the literature. Secondly, it is not only the associative actors who took part in sustainability issues in our cases, since political, administrative, technical,

¹¹ Mr SG, Head of Project Management in the conurbation of Doria, stated that "*dialogue is good when you lead a dialogue knowing where we want to go. It is clearer. In other words, we dialog more to explain than to finally consult. Because major choices of the project were prior to consultation, we must not delude ourselves. [...] One takes advantage of the consultation to enlighten the public on the major choices made. Obviously, the consultation has helped to change the street in a northern area, do not cross a park in the south, etc. But finally...*" (interviewed on 21 February 2015).

regulatory and NGO actors also participated in the development of sustainability issues, and always in a unique way. Third, if the milieu had already adopted a network approach, the contribution of this paper focuses on the specific “alignments of actors” that sustainable development opens (e.g. the presence of unusual actors and interactions between different types of stakeholders). These different stakeholders may have a role as promoter or translator within the meaning of ANT.

The second finding begins with common norms and weak performances in the milieu with regard to the interpretation of sustainability. There is a variance in the projects’ participants’ vision and that of other sustainability stakeholders. Furthermore, these representations are also put to the test in complex projects and the practices of different services. A lack of coordination of the rules of sustainability was also observed, whether in the buying center, project network or milieu.

Territoriality seems crucial in the implementation of sustainability issues in transport infrastructure construction projects. The consideration of sustainability is specific to local actors. In attempting to decrypt difficulty of this new complexity, the milieu, usually consisting of representations, common norms and rules between heterogeneous actors, seems here to be barely legible for project marketing. Cova and Salle (2003) indicate that in unincorporated milieus, such as in emerging and innovative milieus related to high technology, “*analysis of the medium is delicate; it turns into prospective actors and relations between actors*” (p. 101).

Although, in the above cases, a milieu exists (Turia and Levanna have well-developed collective transport networks; Aravis and Doria have built their first railway network but the bus network was already structured, so local mobility stakeholders were used to working together), few common representations can be seen of sustainability, even with the participation of unusual actors. This raises the question of how to operate project marketing activities when the rules are barely legible, even in an existing milieu.

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