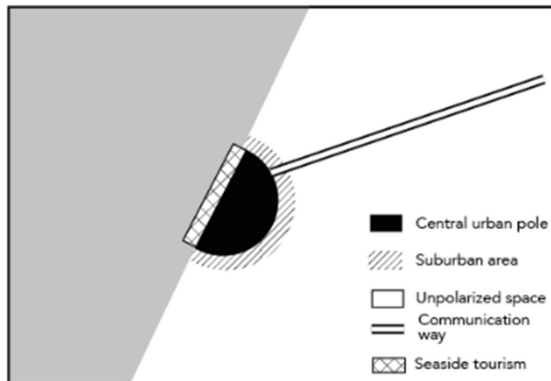


ARCHETYPE 5 Famous seaside resorts



Towns matching this archetype:

A residential town specialised in the “*in place*” economy: La Baule, Arcachon, Quiberon, Dinard, Le Touquet, Perros-Guirec, Sables d’Or-les-Pins, Granville, Deauville, Porto-Vecchio, Saint Tropez, Menton...

DESCRIPTION OF THE ARCHETYPE

Spatial configuration

These bijou resorts are coastal locations with a high heritage value. Their attractiveness comes from their architectural quality. They are often structured around a beach with a promenade and feature luxury retail stores along the seafront. Urbanization is wedged between an area with sea views and a centre set slightly further back. Most of the activity takes place in a rather narrow band along the beach where property is extremely expensive. These towns have become victims of their own success and land reserves are very low. This limited availability hinders any possible managed retreat and reduces adaptation alternatives.

Territorial economy

In this type of resort, the economy is essentially *in-place* and is related to the image of the resort. The economic momentum depends mostly on rich residents and on tourism by very wealthy households. Most of those who live nearest to the beach have very significant financial means. Residents prone the status quo in order to maintain their lifestyle and the *commune*’s attractiveness. The latter attracts investments in high-value property.

Socio-demographic characteristics

Part of the population comprises wealthy pensioners seeking a good quality of life and the availability of personal services. Second-home owners often constitute a large proportion of residents. A younger population may also be found together with investors in rental properties aimed at the high-end of the tourist market. However, the town centre and the

seafront districts are usually occupied by an ageing population. Purchases by rich owners do not cause any particular issues. On the contrary, there is a steady rise in the standard of living of the population and with the sharp increase in house prices, a process of “ultra-gentrification” where rich owners are replaced by even richer ones. This process leads to a heritage dynamic that worsens already existing inequalities with surrounding areas.

Innovation pathways

The historical development of this type of seaside resort has gradually increased the value of the architectural heritage that made the resort famous. This leads to a “protect at all costs” approach to the shoreline and more generally to the natural and tourism heritage which gives the *commune* its reputation. Hence, the shoreline is protected by solid defence structures with regular beach nourishment. The symbolic capital of the resort must be maintained regardless of cost, i.e. its beaches, promenades and famous places generally located along the seafront, and new developments must be resisted. As these *communes* remain attractive, property does not suffer from the risk factor and continues to command high prices.

Governance

The seaside resort has a strong political capacity given the reputation of its elected representatives and their social capital at different levels. This political capacity is also underpinned by positive financial management on account of local taxes and the significant networks of its residents. In the long run, sediment sparsity leads to rising beach maintenance costs and consequently higher local taxes which then increases the numbers of ultra-rich residents and boosts the gentrification process. Many associations comprise rich property owners who lobby elected representatives to maintain the status quo.

Psycho-social characteristics

The heritage image and the reputation of these seaside resorts creates a strong attachment to the place. This attachment plays a positive role but more important are the symbolic and identity roles that derive from the place’s reputation. This strong attachment to the place encourages the status quo. Risk perception is low. Residents are deeply attached to their lifestyle, they quickly become involved to maintain it and tend to be conservative. Even if the arrival of ultra-rich people may undermine the notion of “living together in harmony”, most people still prefer to live in a well-off area offering quality services. The attachment to the coast changes: the issue is no longer to live near the sea but rather to preserve a private social club in a famous location.

ADAPTATION PATHWAYS

Adaptation pathway (slow progression): a dynamic of innovation and gentrification that favours the status quo

Following extreme weather events (EX3), the elected representatives, supported by the well-off, continue to protect the shoreline through solid defence structures and increasing nourishment (G8, T13) to preserve the resort's beaches, seaside heritage and symbolic capital. The strong attachment to the place (PS1), in particular place dependence and place meaning, and the financial and political capacities (ET1, G4) together enable the status quo to be maintained or even enhanced.

Adaptation through managed retreat (G8) is restricted due to the unavailability of land reserves (CS4). However, some very prestigious well-known landmarks, located along the seafront, are relocated in order to preserve the reputation of the place. Rebuilding some of the heritage sites like-for-like also contributes to increasing taxes (ET1) which is considered legitimate and is socially accepted. The ultra-gentrification of the resort (SD2) favours financial investments in technological innovations (TI1) that support the status quo. Priority is given to maintaining attractiveness and reputation (ET3). There is no shortage of ideas: revegetation of threatened areas, hummocks, buildings on stilts and underwater hotels. These developments, coupled with the fact that storm events are relatively rare, strengthen the lack of concern about risk and legitimise the political choices (PS2). For a while, these unusual choices make the resort more attractive (ET3) for the rich and for up-market tourism with a growing concentration of wealth.

Adaptation pathway (fast progression): too much status quo leads to a breaking point

Following a long phase of status quo supported by very significant financial resources (ET1), the increased storm frequency (EX3) and the new insurance requirements (EX1) due in particular to new European regulations (EX2) gradually lead to changes in viewpoints and strategies, both at individual and collective levels (PS2). Despite their substantial wealth, residents hesitate to rebuild and repair recurrent damage... particularly as property prices begin to fall (ET3) and the risks become increasingly clear.

A major triggering event (EX3) with significant economic loss and especially many human casualties raises awareness of the danger and shows that storm impacts are impossible to control. Significant work is carried out together with managed retreat (G8) that changes the landscape and the relationship with the place (PS1), reducing place meaning and heritage attractiveness despite major efforts to reduce the impact on the shoreline landscape for the wealthiest residents. However, the size and duration of the work causes much disturbance which is detrimental to the quality of life and the tranquillity of residents (ET3). The image of

the resort suffers from the duration of the works undertaken and this induces a proportion of the wealthier population to leave (SD2). The newcomers who replace them seek to manage and protect their property as they see fit, using their social capital to obtain exceptions to the rules so as to have more freedom to build defensive structures. There is intense lobbying on the part of these newcomers (G5) and the *communes* gradually lose development control (G4). The relationship with the place becomes more and more utilitarian (place dependence) and symbolic (PS1). The notion of “living together in harmony” breaks down (G3) with growing individualism which calls into question the acceptability of tax contributions by owners, regardless of their income level. The new actors who are invited to bring additional capital contributions, in particular rich foreign investors, aim to transform the town into a museum that serves as a billionaires’ shop window. However, the latter develop private club strategies that, in the long run, undermine social cohesion and internal political choices, exacerbating social divisions and inequalities with other areas (SD1).