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Preface

National parks in the mountains and territorial construction of participative processes: some elements to frame the debate

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A special report in the context of an increasing number of publications on protected areas

The report entitled "*National Parks in the mountains, new territories for participation?*" presents five different studies carried out specifically on this subject. Recent publications have shown to what extent protected areas in general have mobilized researchers over the past 10 years, proposing new ways to examine social and political relationships through the prism of environmental issues (for example, Aubertin & Rodary, ed., 2009; Depraz, 2008; Héritier, dir., 2008; Héritier & Laslaz, dir., 2008). Since its issue No. 2 in 2002 (volume 90), the *Journal of Alpine Research (JAR)* had not devoted a specific issue to protected areas again. This issue was especially focused on the history of protective measures (Mauz; Gauchon). Since its publication, another article in *JAR* on wild fauna (Mounet, 2008) dealt indirectly with the role of these protected areas in the mountains. As for the topic of participation, *Géocarrefour* devoted a special issue to "*territories of participation*" of all kinds (Joliveau, dir., 2001). Recently, a special issue of *VertigO* (May 2009) placed participation and governance at the heart of the debate (Belaidi *et al.*, coord., 2009), while volume 12 of the *Etudes caribéennes* was devoted to "*Protected spaces and areas. Integrated management and participative governance*" (Breton, coord., 2009) in the Caribbean area. This introduction is intended to place the texts in this report within a broader theoretical corpus, to illustrate the latter using the case of the Alps, and to introduce the articles while attempting to compare their contributions.

Are there specific aspects to participative networks in the mountains?

A network brings together a coherent set of elements that aim towards the same result: participation. Yet the latter takes place in a framework of environmental challenges that are especially complex in the mountains. The domination of centers outside of the mountains themselves, the marginal nature of certain valleys, and

recurrent resistance all place these territories in situations where protection measures, often symbolized by national parks, are frequently rejected. The different usages in mountain territories reinforce these recurrent tensions. The flows of tourists thus represent a challenge to which protected area managers often propose identical solutions, based on a "predatory" vision of recreation and on the postulate that mountain environments are "fragile". The emerging modes of "governance", concertation and participative involvement of the resident populations redefine the relationships with environmental protection, but with widely disparate forms and proportions according to local management practices. Nevertheless, the mountains are not the only type of milieu concerned by these participative policies. For example, we should always keep in mind the sea and the coastline as a useful parallel. Indeed, the participation in a national park project for the Mer d'Iroise (Van Tilbeurgh, 2006 ; Boncoeur *et al.*, 2007), modified to become a natural marine park (the first in France in application of the law of 2006), shows many similarities with the observations one can make in certain mountain parks. In addition to the residents, do the local stakeholders play an increasing role in the processes of decentralization, fund-raising with private companies, and even the disengagement of the State? Does the political tendency towards compromise and the search for consensus completely eradicate the resentment and former mistakes of previous environmental protection policies? Can we distinguish approaches common to all national parks in the mountains in terms of concerted territorial management, via cross-border dynamics, exchanges, feedback, and conferences between protected area managers? Does the relative satisfaction with the preservation of the threatened floristic and faunistic species deprive these protected mountain areas of their primary mission (unless it consists of simply maintaining and monitoring these resources) and encourage them to focus on other missions (promotion of cultural and immaterial heritage; implementation of various charters), aiming to promote the notion of "living together" that was neglected for so long?

A attempt to identify participative practices in national parks

The concept of participation is still a "*vague notion*" (Blondiaux, 2008). The Latin etymology *participatio* refers to the notion of *sharing*, linked to *taking part*, or even *giving a share* or a *stake*. Given this etymology, it is also significant that the most frequently used French translation of the English word *stakeholders* is the term *parties prenantes*, referring to all of the stakeholders or groups concerned by a project or action¹. The first forms of participation date back to the 1970s and were often considered "miracle solutions" until they were relatively challenged as of the 1990s.

¹ On the subject of *stakeholders*, refer to the article by S. H eritier.

Participation² is part of the framework of "integrated management", defined "as an iterative and concerted process whose objective is to stimulate reflection and common actions in favor of the sustainable development of a territory" (Bioret et al., 2009, p. 235): it has been widely used for the French coastline in the framework of so-called "GIZC" (Integrated Coastal Zones Management). T. Joliveau (2001, p. 273) defines participation as "the integration into any decision-making process", and it is more of a co-construction than a constrained, predefined framework, even though certain NGOs or international institutions have expressed the wish to formalize it or even transpose it. In this respect, Charnoz (2009, p. 8-9) recalls the intrusion of the term "participative" in all of the texts drafted at the large international environmental summits³, emphasizing its resolutely top-down logic. The very clear focus of the last World Congress on Protected Areas (Durban, 2003) on questions of governance, considered as a way to reach sustainability through permanent negotiation, heralded the victory of the participative management rationale. New terminology appears regularly, such as adaptative management, a buzz word at the 3rd International IUCN Congress (Bangkok, 2004) and presented as flexibility in public action under the effect of collective reflection. As for co-management, hybrid or joint management between parks and local inhabitants, this idea responds more to the expectations of international bodies than local ones. The increasingly popular and incontrovertible notion of participation is sometimes even included in written constitutions (for example, the GELOSE⁴ is a law in Madagascar). And incidentally, in the case of protected areas, participative management is defined as the « situation in which at least two social stakeholders negotiate, define and guarantee between each other an equitable sharing of the functions, rights and responsibilities linked to the management of a territory, area or a given set of natural resources " (Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2000). This report focuses more specifically on these principles of participation and their limits.

Proposal to hierarchize the notions of participation

The pyramid in Figure 1 shows a gradient of participation levels divided into three stages, with the strongest at the base. The gradient is also a temporal evolution and a scalar level, even if the schematization requires a simplification of the spatial interleaving. This process permanently interacts with conflict, compromise and consensus attempts (which intervene whatever the stages of

² For example, for the details of the seven degrees of participation distinguished by James & Blamey (1999) in Australia, refer to the article by S. Héritier.

³ 3 of the 27 principles of the declaration on the environment and development in Rio (1992) are devoted to participation; likewise for the United Nations Millennium Declaration in 2000 or the World Summit in Johannesburg in 2002.

⁴ *GEstion LOcale SEcurisée des ressources naturelles renouvelables (Local Secured Management of renewable energies)*, which clearly indicates the participative framework and the obligations of the different stakeholders.

participation) that lead to a project's acceptance. Another visual representation proposed by S. Davidson (1998), called "*the wheel of participation*", breaks down information, consultation, participation and *empowerment* (with the sense of involvement, of responsibility, of delegation of power) into four quarters of a circle, each subdivided into 3 increasing degrees.

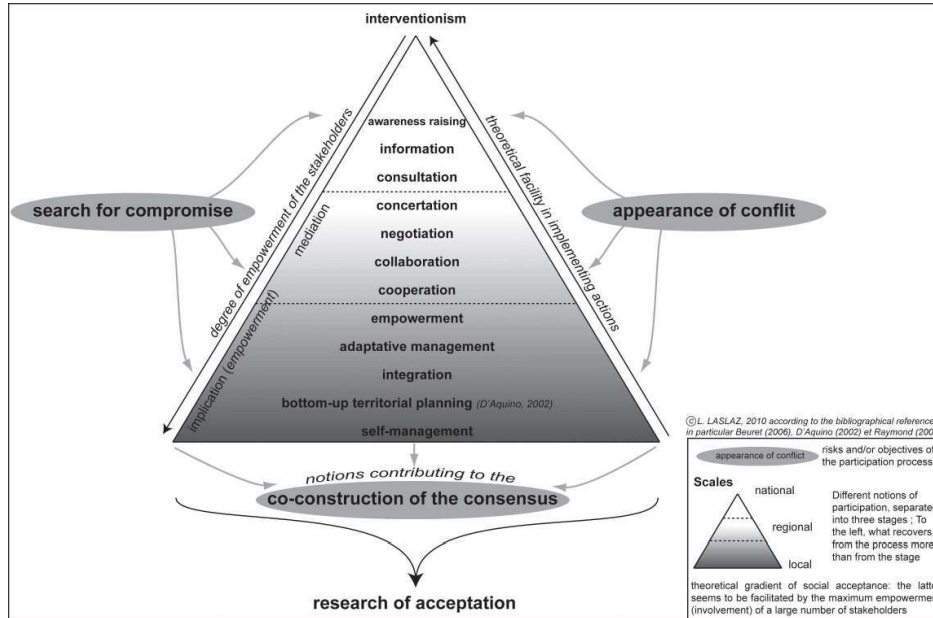


Figure 1. Attempt to hierarchize notions of participation.

Note: The term *participation* refers simultaneously to all of the different notions contained in the pyramid and just one of them. The hierarchy between the terms depends on authors and conceptions.

A certain number of notions that are similar to each other – and upon which authors do not agree – must indeed be hierarchized (Figure 1): they include *consultation*, *concertation*, *negotiation*, *collaboration*, *cooperation* and *participation*. The first term designates a simple request for an opinion, while in the end it is still the elected officials and managers who will decide. This is undoubtedly still the most widely used today in protected areas, although the lack of precise figures prevents us from confirming this hypothesis. The second term refers to a process of dialogue aimed to ensure that proposals are accepted by all parties, in order to accomplish a joint project. J.-E. Beuret (2006, p. 317) proposes a broader vision of *concertation*: "*process to which the stakeholders commit themselves in order to manage property(ies), space(s) or territory(ies) together that are common to them, or to influence the acts and decisions that determine the future of this common property*". He emphasizes its dynamic dimension, focused on the long-term, innovative, characterized by self-adaptation

and not limited inside "bodies". *Negotiation* does not necessarily produce a decision, but aims to prepare for it. *Participation* theoretically refers to intervention at every stage, including in the decision-making chain, which is not necessarily the case of *collaboration*, more specific in time and in space. In Canada, S. Héritier (article in this report) distinguishes it from the more durable *cooperation*, but in both cases there is no possibility to intervene in the decision made by management organizations. *Cooperation* cannot be presented as the ideal solution for conflict resolution. It can also create conflict due to the role and the visibility that each stakeholder tends to give himself. There is a degree of continuity and complementarity between these different notions: minimum *information* and a presentation that is as neutral as possible are required of the people encouraged to participate.

Participation only takes place if the two interlocutors understand each other; this implies accepting the other, at least as an interlocutor, and a cultural and intellectual level that make it possible to develop a shared reference system. In the absence of the latter, many exclusion messages and practices concerning "native" populations were developed. Mutual recognition between the different interlocutors along with efforts to overcome prejudice and fear allows discussion, including in "*invisible orders of recognition*" (Rouilleau-Berger, in Caillé, dir., 2008, p. 137). But does participation not already mean renunciation? When a park is created, claiming that one is opposed to it and then "compromising oneself" by participating in the negotiations concerning its creation has been a frequent illustration of the huge gap between the display of a given attitude and the actual roots of beliefs or premises that are much more complex.

Let us apply participation, something will always result from it...

To paraphrase the titles used by F. Giraut and R. Lajarge (1998: "*Let's make a region, something will always result from it*"), it is often very tempting to use participation by default or on principle, with no real conviction, project, or application of its results in the end. Invoked for its irenic virtues, the participative process is more a policy of appeasement than the identification and solving of the real problems posed by the management of a protected area. Applying it suffices to indicate good faith.

Several authors have criticized the new mandatory standards that this choice represents: the "*dictatorship of partnership*" infiltrating every sphere of civil society denounced by J. Damon (2002), or participation as the "*new tyranny*" as described by B. Cooke & U. Kothari (ed., 2001). This "*new deliberative* (or participative) *imperative*" according to L. Blondiaux's expression, appears to be marked by futility, since the actual sharing of power is a pretence. Moreover, the absence of participation does not mean a denial of democracy, since those who make the decisions are elected officials (from the local to the national, or even European level) who have received a mandate to act, and not necessarily to consult. Sometimes direct State control of environmental issues is simpler and more effective. The trend towards the concertation with no objective nor effective

control helps to reinforce the local to the detriment of the "hollow State" (Léca, 1994). For Damon (*op. cité*, p. 11), it is a "sign of straying" of the latter and a way to move away from the political to benefit the social. Participation is sometimes simply a sham, instrumentalized to steer the debates in a certain direction. The construction of the new integrative reference systems thus alternates between illusions (*L'Espace géographique*, 2002, p. 40) and the recomposition of the stakeholders' games in action. Decisions taken concerning national parks and their operating modes are sometimes considered vague and unclear, therefore this is also true of the partnership conditions and exchanges. The notions of flexibility and adaptation also structure the participative message; it is not sufficient to have the local level participate, the process must also enable its full expression, and not simply be a transposition of a Western or preconceived model neglecting territorial realities. The tools can then be integrative (through the jobs offered for example), collaborative, or "adbocratic", i.e. with no formalization, or *ad hoc* (Saez and Leresche, 1997). This type of participation takes place outside of the bodies provided for in the law, and is initiated by the stakeholders in the field.

The non-productive and the federative: two different tunes...

Thus participation can be counterproductive (with respect to social expectations), in the sense that to govern is *to choose*. Certain ideas expressed by the stakeholders are not applied, leading to frustration or feeling affronted by the choice of another solution, which can also cause stakeholders to dig in their heels. The impression that they have been deprived of a role in the decision-making is often experienced as a betrayal of the word given, even when the different stakeholders are not convinced that they would be able to make the decision themselves. The demand for the absence of State authority, promoted as a more effective solution to solve conflicts at the local level, actually leads to the opposite excess of "extreme" participation. When transmitting property (whatever it is) from one generation to the next, much more than participation, often surrounded by idealist Western rhetoric, the fact that people actually take ownership of the space is what guarantees its protection and operation. But this implies a more complex sharing of property. The question of land (as shown in the articles by R. Miniconi and S. Guyot, S. Héritier, and L. Dejohanet⁵ in the case of the nomadic or semi-nomadic *Adivasi* sedentarized by force) remains the cornerstone of participation, both an obstacle used as an argument for refusal, and a vector for the involvement of owners or users concerned. It is often difficult to break away from the paradigm of the defense of individual or local interests and overcome the "impossible" convergence between central and local.

⁵ The author discusses a *wildlife sanctuary* that does not have national park status. It belongs to category IV of the IUCN. Nevertheless, the participative dynamics observed are similar.

Is participation not also a powerful factor able to reactivate divides and create social tensions, in application of the motto "divide to conquer"? It attempts to operate within two well-known processes that are however not automatic: the shift from a top-down verticality to a bottom-up verticality; requiring preliminary horizontal exchanges between local stakeholders, to foster some degree of agreement and a project that is more or less shared. This elementary perpendicularity is made more complex by other interventions from the various transcalar stakeholders in this codified symmetrical relationship. NGOs, (Aubertin, coord., 2005) and tourist flows, straddling both the local and national levels, interfere with this decision-making order. As for the relationships between the international level and the local contingencies, D. Goeury's article highlights the paradox that sanctuarization has no place in the Ladakh although the context would appear favorable: low population density, marginality, etc. He takes apart the convenient view that the fault lies with the exogenous and not with the endogenous threat. The Ladakhi are assimilated with the virgin spaces they inhabit and embody and that must also be protected, leading to a new form of conservatism, combining a "museum of traditions" with "nature". This criticism from the outside also leads to a condemnation *a priori* and *de facto* of tourism, also identified in Nepal (Sacareau, 2009).

I get involved, you participate, we collaborate, "they" decide

The participation process is frequently portrayed as a democratic commitment from the grass roots, although it may actually be strongly pre-framed and controlled from above. Participation is sometimes merely a new coloring, or window-dressing, enabling a project that was blocked to regain the acceptance it never would have achieved otherwise. This is even more true when the orientations have been chosen previously, as R. Raymond observes (2009, p. 13): it then becomes a tool for the legitimation and validation of decisions that were already official. Thus one must distinguish consultation from the final decision and the role of the different stakeholders in this same final decision-making process, and determine at which stages and which levels the interactions occur. The temporalities of participation fluctuate: they often intervene at the start of a process, rarely during the performance of a project and even less during its assessment. A top-down perception of participative dynamics is still pervasive in many areas, as shown by J. Dellier (*in Laslaz et al., dir., 2010 a*) in the case of South Africa. Participation therefore does not mean State withdrawal; it can sometimes mean a new takeover and a new form of control. Even planning procedures, manifestations of a very vivid centralization, must today be subjected to the participative process.

Participation is also frequently constrained by choices made upstream by experts (D'Aquino, 2002, p. 15). The gap between the expert (who has the ear of the decision-maker, and bases his reasoning on "scientific" arguments) and the

citizen persists (Theys, 2003, paragraph 102), and the two rarely have the same weight in the decisions. The technicization of the public debate was identified by Habermas (1973) as a barrier to citizens' comprehension of the issues concerning them. For the Valdés Peninsula (Argentinean Patagonia), I. Babou (2009) observed that the consultation during its registration procedure followed by its classification as a UNESCO World Heritage site (1999) and as a Natural Protected Area (2001) did not involve any power of decision. He also denounces the negligence of the NGOs present, who did not play an active role in the participative process.

Moreover, it is often the most audible citizens, those who express themselves more easily than others, who position themselves favorably and win out in the end: behind the mask of participation, one finds the same hierarchies of stakeholders. A. Agrawal and K. Gupta (2005) have shown that for the protected areas of the Terai (Nepal), the most wealthy citizens and those the most accustomed to dealing with the administration participated the most in the decentralization and participation process. In reality, participation is rarely a genuine effort to increase the representation of the people mobilized. Not everyone has access to the same forum, those who are "mandated" often only "represent" their own points of view or interests. This also highlights the difficulty to achieve a sufficiently cross-cutting, global vision that is not influenced by corporatism, origins, professions, etc. Finally, participation can be used as a lever to (re)legitimate discredited stakeholders (Theys, 2003, paragraph 40).

"Good governance", or the analogy of the vaccine and its adjuvants

Just like a vaccine intended to prevent disease and epidemics, "good governance" (if it is possible to distinguish "good" from "bad") is seen as the miracle solution to social conflict and opposition to development projects, in the environmental sector or not. Yet like a vaccine, it may be accompanied by adverse effects such as fever, due to the framework in which it is deployed, which adds to the pre-existing tension, since participation is not acceptable to all of the stakeholders; and because group meetings can also sometimes create confrontation and diverging viewpoints. The acceptance of a national park requires that stakeholders take ownership of the concept. Participating means already making it one's own. It is also a way to involve people and convince them of the *win-win* dogma included in many messages. For this reason, the economic argument is increasingly put forward, and considered a condition indispensable to the participation of certain local communities. It is part of the broader rationale of "the carrot rather than the stick" highlighted by L. Dejouhanet in the context of eco-development projects in Parambikulam. K. Boulding (1989) adds the concept of the *bug* to these two extremes, quoted by C. Barnaud (2008, p. 106) as follows: "*The metaphor of the bug is a way of describing an integrative and cooperative form of power. It refers to the power of a group to accomplish something thanks to a gathering of people who have identical objectives, respect the same principles and share the feeling that they belong to a common group*". Participation is

therefore at the core of this interpretation of "good" environmental governance: it involves placing groups of stakeholders in contact with each other: this is where M. Mormont *et al.* (2006) see participation as a process of circulation between different spheres (at different scales, scientific, political, etc.), making it possible to redefine the standards. Among its governance principles, the IUCN (Dudley, 2008, p. 34) proposes: "*legitimacy and the right to speak, subsidiarity, impartiality, absence of prejudice, direction, performance, responsibility, transparency and human rights*", all commonplace notions that one can only agree with. Whatever the case, this wave of participation applied to protected areas is part of a general trend towards the "*socialization of conservation*" (F. Pinton, H. Rakoto and C. Aubertin, *in* Laslaz *et al.*, dir., 2010b) and a fundamental movement that is analyzed by L. Mermet and M. Berlan-Darqu  (dir., 2009).

One aspect of the report focuses on the contribution of the analysis of national parks in the mountains

A national park is defined as a "space, generally classified in category II by the IUCN [90% of them], but not necessarily, characterized by the direct authority of the State (or several states in the case of transnational or international parks) that decided upon its creation, its boundaries and the regulations within the protected area, whose objective is mainly environmental protection (but that tolerates human presence and activities, differentiating it from completely protected reserves), and often without concertation with the "local" populations" (H ritier and Laslaz, dir., 2008, p. 14). This political will to create a reserve is largely based on representations of the mountains by people living outside of them, whether in the 1860-1870s in the American Rocky Mountains (Yellowstone) and Sierra Nevada (Yosemite) or in more recent periods.

Why were these mountain territories, according to the socioeconomic contexts and the political stakes, the theaters of implementation of these national parks? The representations and the specificities of the milieu cannot be enough to explain it; several factors converged this way:

- the application of policies using them as a "test bench" (term used by Pr au - 1964- referring to the first French national park) on the national scale.
- a relative marginality (D ry, 2005) which resulted in various compensatory public policies, of which protection tools are only one form of expression, and which limits the relationship with participation. This has also helped to make its peripheral areas buffer zones on borders, reinforcing them with national parks (Messerli et Ives, 1999). The latter constituted the skeleton of the Cross-border Protected Areas, such as those of Argentina and Chile analyzed by R. Miniconi and S. Guyot. From an ethnic standpoint, L. Dejouhanet's text clearly shows the relationships of domination of the ethnic groups in Parambikulam and the "*detrribalization*" principle.

- certain indications of poverty and differentiated development with respect to the rest of the national territories.
- the representations often associated with different mountain ranges in the collective imagination on the national or international scale, that sometimes have a symbolic or even sacred dimension. D. Walter (2003) described how the creation in 1975 of the Huascarán National Park (White Cordillera, Peru), under American impetus and steering, was seen by the local farmers as a new form of colonization and domination of the high altitude territories they had invested with religious and cultural values.
- the intrusion of tourism: either it raised the environmental awareness of visitors by encouraging them to defend the creation of protected areas (the case of the Alps in the late 19th century with the first mountaineers), or more recently the renown of these areas increased the flows of tourists. I. Sacareau (2009) shows that in Nepal, the creation of the first national parks in 1976 responded to the completely erroneous argument that this would protect the territories from agropastoralism and tourism (trekking). Yet these protected areas actually became levers for the taxation of tourism and did not correspond to the valleys with the most visitors.
- a rich biodiversity recognized and used as an argument to justify the creation of protected areas, even if the intervention on the latter (reforestation) was fairly old.
- a human occupation sometimes less dense than in the surrounding areas, which would appear favorable to the creation of national parks without triggering massive rejection. Yet here again there is no determinism related to population density, which would be a simplistic interpretation of the social conditions for creation, since protected areas with lower population densities are not accepted and integrated more easily in a participative process.

Our report includes contributions on mountainous areas outside of the Alps. Although this was not a deliberate choice, it illustrates the multiplication of fields for study and the focus of French researchers on areas that have received little attention up until now (Ladakh, Australian or New Zealand Alps, Patagonia) that reveal the dissemination of protection policy analyses at the international scale. The case of the Alps is discussed below, with a few avenues for reflection.

French and Swiss Alpine national parks: participation under (re)construction

In the case of France, six of the seven national parks created between 1963 and 1989 were located in mountainous areas (Vanoise, Pyrenees, Cévennes, Ecrins, Mercantour and Guadeloupe), with three in the Alps. One of the last two created (Reunion Island in 2007) helped to reinforce this domination, to such an extent that French Environmental Conference, or *Grenelle de l'environnement* (2007), set the objective of creating three new parks over the next 10 years outside of mountain

areas, to achieve a better balance. In this context of the renewed effervescence of environmental policies, the reform of the national parks in the law of 14 April 2006 was above all marked by a demand for greater representativity of local elected officials. Indeed, preliminary public hearings, in existence since the 19th century, were provided for in the law of 1960, but were limited to the consultation of local populations, whereas the elected officials (opinion of municipal councils) were heard during interviews with park creation project managers (J. Florent for Les Ecrins and L. Bergogne for the Mercantour⁶; P. de Montaignac for the Cévennes and P. Chimits for the Pyrenees⁷). Moreover it should not be forgotten that their opinions were not always taken into account: M. D'Ornano⁸ created the Mercantour National Park in August 1979, after 19 years of heated debates, against the will of the elected officials of the Alpes-Maritimes and Alpes de Haute Provence hinterlands, who refused to occupy their seats on the Board of Directors for almost a year. The participative foundations of the French parks thus very rapidly revealed their limits, and relations were closer to a power struggle than real concertation. Nevertheless, the idea that it was closer to a "*negotiated law*" in the field allowed a certain "tolerance" with respect to regulations (picking flowers such as genepy, warnings preferred to fines, etc.).

In addition, the influence of the model of the Natural Regional Parks⁹ began to exert itself on the National Parks such as the Cévennes, the first national park with a central inhabited area, as reminds K.L. Basset. This influence was illustrated in the law of 2006, which provides for the drafting of a charter in which the type of the park, to be defined, is to be included in the preamble. It is moreover interesting to observe that the validation of these charters is scheduled to start, depending on the park, as of 2010, which is a fairly short time after the publication of the law (if you compare this with the creation phase, much more arduous), which would tend to indicate that their drafting in collaboration with the elected officials will not require as much time as originally feared.

Deciding upon the park's nature took different directions depending on the park. In the Ecrins National Park, an operation entitled "*a territory with character*" consisted in collecting testimonials in written form or in the form of images. Yet in 2008-2009, only 130 had been collected, which for a park with 30,000 inhabitants in the maximum adhesion area and an average 800,000 tourists per year really puts the extent of participation into perspective and highlights the difficulty of involving people in this type of operation. Its Board of Directors is supported by three thematic commissions and a steering committee, and each sector has a

⁶ See L. Laslaz, 2005.

⁷ In addition to the article in this file by K.-L. Basset, see the respective chapters of K.-L. Basset and S. Bobbé *in* Larrère et al., dir., 2009.

⁸ Ministry of the Environment (6/04/1978-22/05/1981).

⁹ Launched during the conference of Lurs, in September 1966, initiated by O. Guichard and S. Antoine.

"partnership" project manager in charge of moderating meetings and collecting feedback. The Mercantour National Park launched a similar exhibit entitled "*Describe the park in your own way*", while the Vanoise National Park preferred to ask a steering committee with roughly 20 members to define the nature of the park. Once an analysis has been made of these operations, it will be useful to identify a profile of the participants in these exhibits, who are probably mostly environmental activists rather than people opposed to the environmentalist cause. Even if the definition of the park's nature cannot be limited to this dual vision, the participants are mostly those who adhere to the idea of the park, and it is harder to involve the others.

Participation can also take place upstream of the project, as shown by the *Espace Mont Blanc*, an intermunicipal organization created by elected officials who oppose the project for an international Mont-Blanc park (whose study mission was launched in June 1989), considered to be a diktat from above (Devouassoud and Labévière, 1992). The authors' message is quite revealing of this incantation to participate: "*mountain dwellers must not feel cheated by a development decided without them*" (p. 137), and the environmental debate led by the *Espace Mont-Blanc* mainly focused on managing transalpine road traffic. In Swiss national parks, the very strict regulations (it is prohibited to enter the park at night or in winter, and to circulate off the marked paths) are closer to those of a "nature" reserve (they are classified in IUCN category Ia) without any real involvement of the local authorities. This, among other reasons, explains the difficulties encountered by the proposal to create a second national park in the Swiss confederation (Laslaz, 2009). Indeed, the Locarnese region (Ticino), after the withdrawal in 2009 of the main municipality concerned among the total 11, Cevio, was defeated by the Adula project (Ticino, Grisons), under examination in Berne since January 2010. This new project comprises a 200 km² central area in a total 1084 km², a proportion that does not satisfy the environmental associations, including the very active *Pro Natura*¹⁰. If it is approved, this protected area will enter a 5-year "*creation phase*" during which a charter will be negotiated, followed by a 10-year "*management phase*". This procedure now also includes a relatively participative dimension.

The elements above inspire a whole set of questions and dialectics to approach the articles in our report:

- what levels of participation, and on what subjects? for what duration and in which areas (specific ones or generalized to the entire National Park) ?
- what contexts for the registration and variation of the participation? depending on different political cultures, socio-economic situations, relatively directive legacies, etc.

¹⁰ Association which claims in a directive fashion the classification of a substantial surface area of Swiss territory as a protected area; it supports projects for national parks and owns land that will provide the skeleton of the future protected areas.

- what proximity or distance between the stakeholders and the national park: who benefits / suffers from what ? who "must" participate?
- what role for the stakeholders ? Organization, hierarchy, balance of power, the keys to their collaboration, freedom of the representatives with respect to the different administrations, inertia of the systems of representation and spokespersonship, etc.
- what are the respective roles of the individual, the group and the collective entities (in terms of visibility, weight, recognition...) in the cases studied?
- what is the respective weight of scientific expertise and popular, or even indigenous, knowledge, in the decision-making process?

A report that multiplies perspectives at different temporal and spatial scales

The examples studied in this special report make it possible to compare different temporal and spatial scales. From the long history of the oldest parks in the world studied by S. Héritier (USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand), to the more recent experience of the Cévennes (1970) or Ladakh (1971) parks, hindsight with respect to the protected areas analyzed is more or less significant, and the studies carried out to date more or less numerous. Likewise, the multiple scales allow us to compare cases at the scale of one park or reserve (K.L. Basset, L. Dejouhanet), several parks in the same region of India (D. Goeury), several parks in two States, the Mapuche country in Chile and Argentina (R. Miniconi and S. Guyot, even if the article mainly focuses on the Nahuel Huapi national park), and up to four States with their environmental protection policies (S. Héritier). In addition, several texts highlight the growing intrusion of the global scale at the local level (D. Goeury and S. Héritier). It is true that for protected areas, attractiveness to tourists and the involvement of NGOs in their creation and management are primordial.

This special report also finds its echo and continuation in the articles published in a recent issue of *Mélanges*. R.G. Bornales, G.D. Binobo and M.V.O. Espaldon analyze the case of the participation of the Subanen ethnic group in the Mount Malindang National Park (Mindanao, Philippines), a volcanic massif protected in 1971 and included by the Philippine State on the indicative list of sites to be submitted to UNESCO for world heritage classification. C. Barnaud focuses on the case of the Nan Province National Park (northern Thailand), also concerned by minorities, notably two Mien communities. Two studies at the scale of a park in Southeast Asia, focused on an analysis of the relationship between peripheral ethnic groups and the center, conclude this study of participative processes in national parks in the mountains.

The wealth of different cases, the variety of development situations (the major disparities between India and the Anglo-Saxon countries are analyzed here),

and the combined perspectives of researchers, be they geographers or historians, reinforce the relevance of this special report. Beyond the authors' passion for their field of research, explored in depth, those who manage protected areas and those who wish to better understand their operating modes will find food for thought here that can be transposed and generalized.

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