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Des montagnes en crise : quelles réponses par l'innovation sociale ?

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### From Uncertain Space: Spatial Trajectory of a Social Innovation 'by Withdrawal'. Study of the Composition of the Association of Lodges and Huts in Queyras (Hautes-Alpes, France)

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# From Uncertain Space: Spatial Trajectory of a Social Innovation 'by Withdrawal'. Study of the Composition of the Association of Lodges and Huts in Queyras (Hautes-Alpes, France)

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

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## Introduction

- <sup>1</sup> In Queyras, as in other mountain territories, the tourism development model is under review. The effects of climate change are testing the viability of investments that have already been or are currently being made to ensure the continuing operation of snow sports. At the same time, visitors' enthusiasm for "all-ski" resorts, which rely solely on skiing year-round, is eroding (Vanat, 2018). The demographic decline that has been observed in some mountain territories raises the question of how appealing they still are. For example, between 2010 and 2015, seven of the eight municipalities in Queyras saw a decrease in their populations ranging from -0.4% to -4.1%.<sup>1</sup> Thus, while "the resorts saved the country" (I1) <sup>2</sup>during the sharp demographic decline of the 1960s,

new data are spelling trouble for the way these communities have operated until now and suggest the urgency of coming up with credible alternatives to all-ski and perhaps even all-tourism resorts (Bourdeau, 2007).

- 2 Such threats are turning the alpine regions into useful laboratories (Richard *et al.*, 2010) where adaptation trajectories can be observed. These tourist areas are characterised by crisscrossing lines of thinking: between strongly polarised tourist entities (resorts) and networks of actors (Painter, 2009) from civil society that have a broad spatial impact. This paper takes into account the latter actors' active role in the development of wayfaring practices in Queyras – a development that differs in its form and features from the more planned-out institutional model that has been at the root of village resorts since the 1960s.
- 3 This study examines the *spatial trajectory* of wayfaring activities in the Queyras Valley, potential vectors for a shift in the tourism model. Because of their diffuse character, these activities entail a kind of management that is different from the one structuring traditional resorts. Thus, we postulate that the (re)configuration of this network happens where the two lines of thinking intersect: an institutional and a reticular rationale, with the latter offering the actors a greater degree of freedom but without enabling optimal territorial integration.
- 4 Our monographic type of analysis is similar to the anthropological approach in its “entanglement of social logics” (Olivier De Sardan, 2001) and is based on the actor-network theory (Latour, 2006). It specifically uses the concept of innovation by withdrawal (Goulet and Vinck, 2006), combined with various theoretical contributions from pragmatic sociology (Boltanski and Thévenot, 1991; Chateauraynaud and Debaz, 2017) and social geography (Massey, 2005).
- 5 The field research is based on 15 semi-structured interviews (Blanchet and Gotman, 2007) with various socio-professional players (managers of lodges and huts, organisers of sports activities), elected representatives and experts (Tourist Office, Queyras Natural Regional Park). In addition, various documents were analysed (tourist brochures, websites, press articles and personal archives, among others). Data processing was done qualitatively in order to analyse the *situation*, which Barthe *et al.* define as “the present of the action as it unfolds” (Barthe *et al.*, 2013, p. 180).

## Towards a symmetrical anthropology of space

### Territories and networks, two logics sealed by space

- 6 In a territorial reading updated with the addition of the concept of a network (of actors), it appears, by following Painter (2009), that while “networks seem dynamic, territories appear static and resistant to change”. In English, a territory is a defined area operating according to an institutional logic. By contrast, civil society is divided into different networks of actors: more or less formal collectives redefined according to the whims of new associations and re-assignments. We are interested in how these two logics overlap. At times, the literature has heralded the end of territories in favour of networks or confirmed the heuristic interest of their continuing association with each other (Agnew, 1999; Painter, 2009). Our goal here is to study this second proposition. It seems to us that, while private, commercial or associative logics are better able to develop in the particular area because of their “marginal” character (Bautès and

Reginensi, 2008), it is only by building relationships with institutional actors that they can stand a real chance to transform the space.

- 7 The concept of space allows us to analyse the links between these two logics because it helps to understand the transformation process. Unlike the term's static meaning as an "absolute container of objects that have their own defined geographies" (Painter, 2009), we use Massey's words to define it as "the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality" (Massey, 2005, p. 9). This multiplicity is dynamic, unstable and not *a priori* circumscribed. It is structured by a common, material (place, area) or immaterial (lifestyle, cultural referent, relational sphere) referent. The infinite possibilities of associations with a labile character make the space eminently uncertain.
- 8 From a perspective of symmetrical anthropology, space as a relational system hinges on the *principle of generalised symmetry* (Callon 1986, Latour 1991) and invites us to reassert the status of non-humans in the work of collectives as "active elements organising people's relationships with each other and with their environment" (Akrich, 1987). Thus, as an actant, non-humans structure and participate in the reconfiguration of collectives and the resulting innovation. They are not only stabilising factors (Murdoch, 1997) but also elements that can disrupt situations.

### Innovation by withdrawal and spatial trajectory

- 9 It is possible to analyse the development of wayfaring practices in Queyras through the prism of innovation by withdrawal, which is "founded on reducing a practice or ceasing to use a given artefact" (Goulet and Vinck, 2002). This theoretical tool uses the foundations of the *sociology of translation* (Callon, 1986, Latour, 2006), which conceives of innovation as a network structured by movements and flows: "the keywords are interactions, decompartmentalisation, flow of information, consultation, adaptation and flexibility" (Akrich, Callon and Latour, 1986, p. 6).
- 10 Unlike innovation by withdrawal as defined by Goulet and Vinck, which is anticipated and the result of a decision, the *situation* described here has an open temporality (Lévy, 2018), and the withdrawals are sustained and uncertain (Callon, Lascoumes and Barthes, 2001). In our case study, several withdrawals will punctuate the gradual structuring of innovation (snow, economic partner, practitioners). Following each withdrawal, the innovation develops around a new structuring element.
- 11 Innovation forms gradually thanks to successive associations and withdrawals and, thus, participates in the spatial trajectory. The spatial trajectory takes into account the actors' hold on the space (Chateauraynaud and Debaz, 2017), whether as individuals or as part of the same collectives. In this respect, innovation by withdrawal is a theoretical tool that offers a framework for this trajectory, with particular emphasis on the breaks in the network. These withdrawals produce swings and bifurcations that can ultimately transform the space.

## Towards a bifurcation in the tourism model?

### Durability of the winter model amid climate uncertainty

- 12 From 1965 to 1983, Queyras served as a genuine laboratory for experimentation thanks to an endogenous tourism development<sup>3</sup> that included the creation of eight “village-resorts”, which Philippe Lamour<sup>4</sup> initiated. Alpine skiing was at the centre of developments for the winter season, which revolved around *ski lifts*: “in terms of sports equipment, the ski lift systems are the most important.”<sup>5</sup>
- 13 However, three consecutive winters without snow at the end of the 1980s marked “a major turning point in the winter sports economy” (Gauchon, 2009, p. 199) as it called into question the relevance of this winter model that focuses exclusively on alpine skiing. In Queyras, the semi-public company that centrally managed the ski lift network experienced financial difficulties. Its accounts improved thanks to support from its main financial backer, the District<sup>6</sup>: “In 1992, following seasons with poor snow conditions that had led to significant losses for the semi-public company, it was obliged to rebuild its capital.”<sup>7</sup> This event had a major impact on the overhaul of the municipalities’ and the District’s tourism policies, especially around investments to equip the ski areas with snowmakers: “That’s what caused us problems, the snowmakers” (I2).<sup>8</sup> A new turning point came in 2007: The General Council took over management of the ski lifts through a public company, closing four of the eight resorts<sup>9</sup> and dismantling several ski lifts at the remaining resorts. From an *intermediary* at the heart of the Queyras space, temporarily forging many relationships between networks and the territory, the *snow* became a *mediator*, that is to say, an entity that “transforms, translates, distorts and modifies the meaning or the elements” (Latour, 2006, p. 58) because of its uncertain and unpredictable character (I3).<sup>10</sup>
- 14 Lodges and mountain huts have little connection with alpine skiing and are less directly affected by the removal of the ski lifts. However, *snow* acts as an actant to connect them via other practices, such as cross-country skiing (I3). This use of the lodges and huts during the winter decreased in the 1990s, with a “switchover in 2000”, luckily offset by an increase in the summer share in the overall number: “Now I make 65% of the total in the summer, and 35% in the winter” (I3).
- 15 The disappearance or the great unpredictability of the *snow* actant, along with the subsequent dismantling of the ski lifts, is mentioned by the actors as a form of withdrawal and is indirectly at the root of the innovation. New associations are looking to diversify economic activity: “What makes an innovation strong is as much the robustness and the number of links that are broken for good as the number and the robustness of links that connect the entities with an innovative project” (Goulet and Vinck, 2002, p. 199). Climate change is making this “end of certainty” all the more acute regarding the *snow* actant and was mentioned by all the actors we met, like I4, who wonders: “We will have less and less snow, we won’t be able to make snow with the snowmakers anymore, so what are we going to do?”<sup>11</sup>

## Creation of a formalised and diffuse collective around a common purpose

- 16 Since the very beginning, the tourism development model of Queyras has been bi-seasonal.<sup>12</sup> In the 1990s, academic research reaffirmed the importance of summer tourism as a tool to leverage development: “this summer attendance is vital to dozens of municipalities in the Hautes-Alpes department” (Barbier, 1989, p. 5). To develop this tourism, the *amenities* (trails, lodges and mountain huts, nature, sunshine...) have to be combined with each other in order to turn them into resources (Raffestin, 1980). Owing to the institutional territory’s overriding commitment to the ski areas,<sup>13</sup> the socio-professional actors (civil logic) have seized upon this issue, independently of the institutions, to create a network that will gradually become self-sufficient.
- 17 The Association of Lodges and Huts in Queyras, comprising seven rest lodges and mountain huts,<sup>14</sup> was created in 1993 around the *civic city* (Boltanski and Thévenot, 1991), linked to a common desire among these accommodation providers for representation in different institutional bodies. The vast network of trails laid out in the late 1960s with the help of the *Grande Traversée des Alpes* association, while constituting a pre-structuration of the space (Bourdeau, 2009), has not yet been fully exploited as a resource by the managers of the lodges and huts. In 1995, the topological network (Painter, 2009) made up of trails and lodges was formalised with the integration of a new actant: GuilTour. A semi-public company financed mostly by the District and linked to the Queyras Tourism Promotion Office, it became the only reservation centre to market several accommodation options and activities.
- 18 A commercial agreement was signed between the Association of Lodges and Huts and GuilTour based on a shared interest: promoting and developing independent wayfaring activities.<sup>15</sup> This contract made it possible to reduce the number of interlocutors required to organise this type of stay when a single telephone number operated by GuilTour was set up. The following year (1994), an informal alliance between the association and a provider in the valley also allowed hikers’ bags to be transported from one hut to another, a service included in the reservation process run by GuilTour.
- 19 Below, we will follow the evolution of the identity and functionalities of the reservation tool that was born out of these initial (formal and informal) agreements by focusing on the social reconfigurations that characterised its development (Latour, 2006) rather than its significance as a technological innovation.

## Towards a superior common territorial principle?

### Instability of the actants and reconfigurations

- 20 The history of the Association of Lodges and Huts of Queyras has been punctuated by several withdrawals of actants, each time offset by new associations. These reconfigurations were structured around a *superior common principle* (Boltanski and Thévenot, 1991) based on the collective’s pre-eminence. The goal is the viability and preservation of economic activities centred on tourism and having to ensure the sustainability of the “neo” players, for the most part the result of the *amenity migration* (Martin, 2013) phenomenon.

- 21 These withdrawals can be characterised by their temporality (based on whether they are temporary or definitive), their spatiality (localised or generalised), their origin (endogenous or exogenous to the network) and their effect (drastic or latent); they affect the conditions for participation (e.g. when the snow remains on the high passes longer than usual), the practice itself (fewer practitioners or transformation of practices), or they may be linked to the networks of actors that initiated and promote these activities.
- 22 The very nature of wayfaring activities implies a type of management characterised by unpredictability and indeterminacy (Tsing, 2015). This moving practice (Berthelot, 2012) is a practice by autonomous practitioners who go beyond the purely organisational framework while indirectly structuring it (Rech, 2010). Other actants (snow, meteorology...) further reinforce this labile character.
- 23 Behind these elements marked by uncertainty, the fixed nature of the trails and the location of lodges and huts, as well as the tool's relative stability since the agreement was signed with GuilTour, are the non-human elements whose "long-lasting influence helps establish social forms that can last and stand independently from our continually decaying interactions" (Murdoch, 1997, p. 328). These actants contribute to stabilising associations, which, however, are not made immutable. Thus, as a *compulsory crossing point* (Callon, 1986), any modification made to one of these actants contributes to re-orientating the network in a lasting way. In 2008, the transformation of the Queyras Tourism Promotion Office into an EPIC<sup>16</sup> named the "Intermunicipal tourist office of Queyras" led to the latter creating its own reservation centre and cutting links with the GuilTour company. This abrupt, endogenous and permanent new withdrawal led to the suspension of GuilTour's marketing of unguided hikes and, subsequently, a sharp drop in the number of hikers independently undertaking the Queyras walk: "It was a real blow to us, and it was accompanied by a drop in the number of unguided hikes" (I3).

### Translating for the sake of stability

- 24 After GuilTour had withdrawn, and because the new reservation centre managed by the Office of Intermunicipal Tourism (OTI) did not meet the hosts' needs, <sup>17</sup>members of the association embarked on a new *translation process*<sup>18</sup> (Callon, 1986) with the aim of preserving control over their sales tool in the long term. Drawing on experiences relating to Mont-Blanc ([montourdumontblanc.com](http://montourdumontblanc.com)) and the Clarée Valley ([refugesclareethabor.com](http://refugesclareethabor.com)), members of the association approached *Alliances-Réseaux*, a digital solutions provider that offers tools for online bookings. Thus, in 2013 the "montourduqueyras.com" website was born, which allows booking and paying (since 2016) online for all accommodation on the various wayfaring circuits.
- 25 This tool's socio-spatial construction gradually contributed to moving the socio-professional actors away from the institutional logic, over which they had very little control (Chateauraynaud and Debaz, 2017).<sup>19</sup> Because of sometimes competing interests,<sup>20</sup> the hosts challenged the OTI's action, and many of these actors were drawn to a competing promotional website for Queyras ([enviedequeyras.com](http://enviedequeyras.com)) developed in the private sector. The association's only link with the OTI was a booking widget that showed and made it possible to book lodges and huts directly from the OTI website. This widget was removed in 2017 with the creation of a new site promoting the newly expanded territory that now includes Guillestrois.<sup>21</sup>

- 26 The search for stability happened on the side-lines of institutions. What had previously constituted a strength (Bautès and Réginensi, 2008) with the preservation of important degrees of freedom could now lead the association to operate in a vacuum, in contrast with the process of spatial inscription, and call its ability to innovate into question: “an organisation (or a set of organisations) promoting interactions, constant back and forths and all kinds of negotiations that allow rapid adaptation is one that is innovative” (Akrich, Callon and Latour, 1988, pp. 5-6).

## The spatial inscription of innovation

- 27 Thus far, we have shown the construction of a network punctuated by withdrawals and new associations. While the network structures innovation, the next step questions its capacity to be included in spatial multiplicity (Massey, 2005) by integrating with other networks and joining the territorial and institutional logic.
- 28 As already mentioned, the spatial multiplicity is held together by a material or an immaterial referent. Outside of informal or ad hoc relationships, there are no physical links with other socio-professional players in the valley. However, while the development of innovation has focused on operating in a vacuum until now, there are indications that new connections are being established with various institutional players, particularly the OTI and the Queyras Natural Regional Park.
- 29 The arrival of a new director at the Intermunicipal Tourist Office in 2018 and the organisation of several events and meetings aimed at “getting back socio-professionals” herald a new era. The current president of the Association of Lodges and Huts is contemplating the possibility of forging links again: “we have a tool that could be even more powerful than it already is, but to that end, we might need the help of the OTI, for example. And in terms of human resources and skills, it would allow the office to rely on us to develop its messaging pertaining to wayfaring” (I5). However, there is some evidence that the translation process is still in its infancy. An edition of the “Queyras Mag” magazine from the summer of 2018, which was published by the OTI, devoted eight pages to wayfaring. A careful reading of this issue reveals competition specific to the *market city* (Boltanski and Thévenot, 1991), which exists between the Tourist Office’s official reservation centre (linked to various local travel agencies) and the very discreetly mentioned “montourduqueyras.com”.
- 30 However, these material links can also refer to an axiological, immaterial unit related to the concept of a semiosphere (Raffestin, 1986) by questioning the cultural component of the links within the different networks and logics. As early as 2017, a translation process was initiated to engage the association’s host members in a “zero waste” approach by having them systematically sell reusable picnic boxes to their customers. Promoted by both the Guillestrois-Queyras PETR<sup>22</sup> and SMITOMGA,<sup>23</sup> this initiative, built around the “picnic box” actant, goes beyond the simple sale of the physical “box” and aims to “lead to real action on the territory”<sup>24</sup> (I5).
- 31 Although the networks can keep on growing, their meaning has to be sought within a defined area. The notions of boundaries and resources can shed light on the *semiotisation process of space* (Raffestin, 1986, p. 180). The boundary ties in with the notion of a *configurating limit* (Lussault, 2007). It defines both an interiority and a relationship to the externality. It is on this basis that “territory”, in the term’s institutional sense, takes on its full meaning. In the Queyras Valley, the Queyras



Natural Regional Park seals this unity of thought and action, even more so since the merger of the Communities of Communes.<sup>25</sup> The stated objective of the charter of the Queyras Natural Regional Park is “to establish conditions favourable to the emergence of new production activities, services, commercial activities (...) privileg(ing) permanence rather than seasonality, diversification rather than tourism mono-culture, sustainability rather than the ephemeral. These conditions respect the balance in the territory.” This project is in perfect harmony with the foundations of social innovation that we have described.

- 32 Beyond the contingent associations of localised, circumscribed and contextual interests, a *superior common territorial principle*, defined as the shared vision that transcends all the players, invites us to broaden our reflection beyond the boundaries of the network described here and to consider the civic city’s pre-eminence over a competitive market city (Boltanski and Thévenot, 1991): “Queyras is everything linked together” (I2) in a common desire “not (...) to get bigger: What saves us today is that we have not grown too much, that we have changed little.”<sup>26</sup> Thus, this territorial principle guides the association in the gradual orientation of its spatial trajectory towards the territory and other spatial logics in the valley.

## Conclusion

- 33 It is becoming more and more urgent for the tourist model in mountain territories to change, particularly outside major ski resorts. However, it is “difficult to find what can replace alpine skiing” (I6). It seems that a socio-technical blocking (David, 1985) precludes thinking about or strongly supporting any alternatives. In Queyras, recent public investments from the southern part of France are still largely focused on alpine skiing.<sup>27</sup>
- 34 Therefore, we are still left with the questions of the origin, inflection point, modalities and spatiality of this transition with respect to tourism. We have given an example of this by describing a process that is partly undefined, gradually put together, with uncertain orientations whose structural coherence we have reconstructed after the fact, and is undertaken on the basis of an open temporality. To us, its trajectory seems to be governed by a principle of improvisation, that is, an “action that produces specific effects and makes progress through interactions that draw a complex field of forces constantly tending towards an imbalance” (Lévy, 2018). We were particularly interested in the spatial inscription of the transition and sought to lay out its diffuse (Bourdeau, 1994) and reticular character and to alternate between informal and formal relations. The example here is close to the concept of territorial development, which “clearly indicates an ambition to be part of a different conception of action than the one taken on by democratic communities (...) namely, a conception of collective action taken up anew by actors who (...) work to build not only collectives that go far beyond the local perimeter but also common, globally shared interests and, more or less everywhere, liveable territorialities” (Coste and Lajarge, 2014).
- 35 This collective of hosts has been able to establish links between actors and actants in order to create a real resource: not material to acquire or possess but “a relationship whose success brings out the properties necessary to satisfy needs” (Raffestin 1980, p. 42). The aim is to maintain and preserve this resource over the long term – a truly “dynamic issue” (Raffestin, 1980) given the instability of associations. The current

translations that are made towards the institutional actors support a better spatial inscription of the resource but sometimes work counter to the pursuit of freedom of action (Tsing, 2017). In the end, the whole coheres around a *superior common territorial principle* that intersects with the already mentioned *civic city* and more and more clearly, it would seem, the *ecological city* (Lafaye and Thévenot, 1993).<sup>28</sup> For the latter, “the things of nature, the cause of nature, are more and more often invoked in relationships between people”. The drafting of the next charter of the Queyras Natural Regional Park places nature and biodiversity at the centre of discussions.<sup>29</sup>

- 36 The expected effects of climate change make the hypothesis of increasing withdrawals of snow and ski lifts at the valley level highly plausible,<sup>30</sup> which will help to connect all the networks and logics around this *superior common territorial principle* and thereby foster a consideration of what comes after “all-ski” and even after “all-tourism” (Bourdeau, 2007).

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## NOTES

1. Statistiques INSEE, consulted on 20 February 2019 using the “Évolution annuelle moyenne de la population 2010-2015” filter: <https://statistiques-locales.insee.fr>.
2. Interview with I1, a mountain guide and co-manager of a lodge.
3. “to create a tourist resort for the summer and the winter (...) not a resort established and led from the outside by elements that are foreign to the municipality, but a family-friendly resort, created with the help of and for the benefit of the local population”, excerpt from the minutes of the Ceillac municipal council, 1 May 1965.
4. Philippe Lamour was a senior official at DATAR from 1964 to 1973, the mayor of Ceillac from 1965 to 1983 and president of the Queyras Natural Regional Park from 1977 to 1992.
5. Minutes of the Ceillac municipal council, 1965-1970, that is, the first five years of Philippe Lamour’s time as mayor.
6. Created in 1988 to replace SIVOM, the District took over all the latter’s scope of authority: Just like SIVOM, one of its roles in Queyras was to (re)structure investment in and management of the ski lifts. In 2001, the District was replaced by the Community of Communes of Escartons, a change that was accompanied by the creation of a community council and a separate tax status. The community of communes continued to finance and manage the Queyras ski lifts through a semi-public company until 2003, when a joint association was formed.
7. Final management letter regarding the management of the Queyras District, published by the PACA Regional Audit Office, 2000.
8. Interview with I2, a former mayor of Arvieux, who was the first to have snowmakers installed in Queyras.

9. The Villevieille, Château-Queyras, Aiguilles and Ristolas resorts.
10. Interview with I3, owner of a lodge in Abriès and the association's president from 1993 to 2008: "I saw winters without snow when we got the lodge in the 1990s. At the end of that same winter, there was wet snow (...) high up. The first hikers who arrived in June to travel through Queyras couldn't cross the peaks because there was too much snow."
11. Interview with I4, who is a ski and paragliding instructor and president of the Association of Socio-professional Nature Sports Organisers.
12. Excerpt from the minutes of the Ceillac municipal council of 1 May 1965.
13. In 1992, the semi-public company of Queyras benefitted from a debt write-off and a financial contribution of 4.6 million and 2.3 million francs, respectively, made by the District: "Therefore, the District alone financed the increase in capital." Excerpt from the "Final management letter regarding the management of the Queyras District", published by the PACA Regional Audit Office. Moreover, I4, a player involved in nature sports, says: "We haven't done anything, nothing at all, to develop summer tourism, which is developing absolutely on its own. Only 35% of overnight stays are in the winter."
14. Les Baladins in Ceillac, Les Gabelous in St Véran, the Agnel Hut at Col Agnel, Les Villards in Abriès, the Fonts Hut in Cervières, Le Grand Rochebrune in Souliers and Les Bons enfants in Brunissard.
15. Recreational wayfaring is a sports practice based on moving while taking part in various activities (hiking, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, mountain biking) in different stages over several consecutive days. Those who participate may choose to use travel agencies that manage the entire organisational aspect or can prepare the trip themselves.
16. *Établissement public à caractère industriel et commercial* (industrial and commercial public body).
17. On this topic, I5, the president of the Association of Lodges and Huts and co-manager of a lodge/hotel in Molines, says: "It's not possible to sell our accommodation through the office or the reservation centre."
18. The concept of translation reflects a process of association that, within the framework of projects or innovations, is divided into four stages: problematisation, profit sharing, enlistment and the mobilisation of allies.
19. Interview with I6, the director of the French Ski School (ESI) of Abriès: "Among the elected officials at the Tourist Office, no one works on tourism, and it is they who make the final decisions (...) a lack of common sense, a lack of listening from socio-professionals." In addition, the director of the OTI noted the challenge the administrative logic faces in reconciling with the new territorial synergy (merger of the tourist offices), as well as the tourist logic, which revolves around cultural issues.
20. Interview with I7, a photographer and journalist who participated in the Queyras Mag. He noted the deals made by the Ski Lift Management Company of Queyras to have the magazine's first cover be a photo taken on the ski slopes rather than one highlighting cross-country skiing, which interests a big chunk of the clientele at the area's lodges and huts.
21. On 1 January 2017, in accordance with the NOTRe law, tourism promotion became a community competence, forcing the tourist offices of Guillestrois and Queyras to merge.
22. *Pôle d'Équilibre Territorial Rural* (Rural and Territorial Equilibrium Hubs).
23. Syndicat Mixte de Traitement des Ordures Ménagères des cantons de Guillestre et de l'Argentière-La-Bessée (Household Waste Treatment Association of the Guillestre and Argentière-La-Bessée cantons).
24. In an article that appeared in the 13 December 2018 issue of the local weekly "Alpes & Midi", I5 noted this pioneering initiative: "There are around 30 of us, and we have joined together to communicate about the approach. (...) Having realised that while wayfaring produces a lot of waste, some of it can be prevented, vacationers are following the approach all the way."

25. On 1 January 2017, in accordance with the NOTRe law, the Guillestrois and Queyras communities of communes merged. As a result, the tourism jurisdiction became a joint communal affair. Two resorts in the new community, Vars and Risoul, kept their own tourist office, as authorised by Act II of the Mountain Law for Classified Resorts.

26. Interview with I8, a ski instructor and the owner/manager of a camping area/bar/restaurant at the foot of the Abriès ski area.

27. In its five-year plan entitled "Contract for the Resort of Tomorrow", the PACA Regional Council's Plenary Assembly of Thursday, 3 November 2016, granted a budget of 1 million euros to Queyras resorts, with the first stated objective being the "development of structural facilities related to alpine and Nordic skiing".

28. In 1999, Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello added a seventh city to the conceptual arsenal of the Economics of Worth. However, the city of the project, based on the network and the possibility of increasing the number of connections and links, does not, in our opinion, correspond to the networking process that underlies the social innovation presented here. Indeed, Boltanski and Chiapello conceive of the project as a "highly activated section of network" (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005, p. 104) whose aim is ultimately to depersonalise the role of every actor or actant and make them interchangeable with each other: "In the seamless fabric of the network, projects delineate a multitude of mini-spaces of calculation, wherein orders can be generated and justified" (*ibid.*, p. 106). There is no way in which such a project can be "territorialised" or form part of the historical-cultural sediment.

29. Interview with I9, who is in charge of drafting the PNRQ 2022-2034 charter. In an article published on 13 December 2018 in the local weekly "Alpes & Midi", the director of the OTI described Queyras as "an inhabited territory with values: respect towards and sharing of nature and human activity".

30. Interview with I6: In response to the question, "What would be the trigger for Queyras to engage in an alternative way?", I6 replied without hesitating, "Three consecutive winters without snow."

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## ABSTRACTS

Alpine territories located outside major ski areas have often developed in contrasting ways: On the one hand, improvements are made for alpine skiing; on the other hand, there is a need to build an alternative model that supports other practices and other seasons besides winter. Queyras has followed this cyclical process by alternating between good periods of development driven by innovation and periods of crisis. This paper traces the growth of a host association that has been promoting wayfaring activities for the past 15 years. This association has become an important player in promoting these activities and is identified by tourism stakeholders as a major tool to leverage the future of Queyras's identity as a tourist destination. The association's developmental trajectory is regularly affected by the withdrawal of non-human actors. While they had previously structured and balanced its support network, the latter has had to be (re)configured around new actors and actants. Our conclusions suggest there is an improvised evolution towards agility and freedom of action as the institutional actor gradually retreats. Recently, this evolution has been accompanied by various translation processes aimed at restoring overall coherence through a superior common territorial principle associated with civic and ecological cities.

## INDEX

**Keywords:** innovation by withdrawal, spatial trajectory, superior common territorial principle, actors, symmetry

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