

# **Mountains in European Geographical and Political Imagination: yesterday – today - tomorrow**

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## **General question and methods for answering it**

Main Idea of this seminar = To bring together expert visions of mountains in European Space on one side, and local and regional actors trying to cope with specific situations in mountain regions, on the other.

Main question I am working on = When and how people and institutions agree for building territorial public policies ?

## General question and methods for answering it

When and how people and institutions agree for building territorial public policies ?

- Common geographical objects (cities, **mountains**, districts, watersheds, etc.)
- Various meanings and experiences
- "Translation"

= Paradigm : a kind a lens through which a reality is shaped and thanks to which collective action is made possible.

## **General question and methods for answering it**

When and how people and institutions agree for building territorial public policies ?

Common agreement on a paradigm occurs when people agree on three elements

- A set of images
- A rational argumentation
- A set of rules or laws

## **General question and methods for answering it**

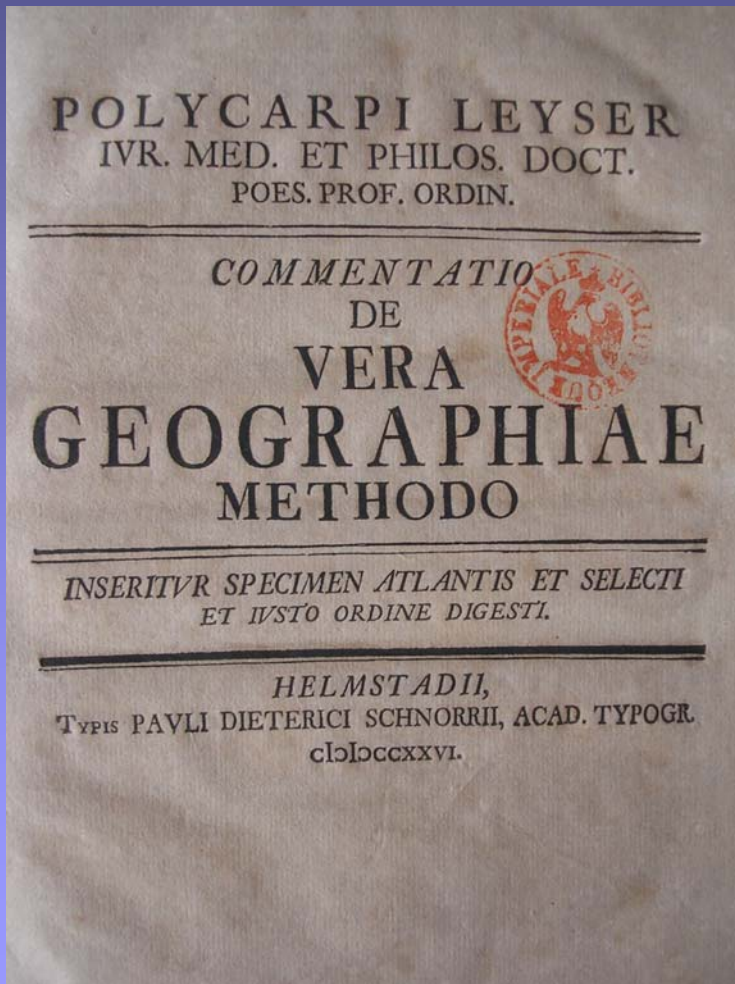
The European project needs such paradigms. It needs the common identification of some common objects or ideals – such as Human Rights or Peace, or for territorial matter cities (or the cultural meaning of urbanity) and borders for example.

Are mountains such an object ? Can Europeans, whatever status, political competencies, cultural level they have, share a common paradigm related to mountains ?

## **SOME TIME AGO : Early paradigms combining Europe and Mountains**

- The European continent, « the system of mountains » and the rise of modern Nation-States (1750-1918)
- Welfare-States and the marginalized mountains (1945-1980's)

# Paradigm 1 : Grounding political geography and political economy in natural knowledge



A. von Humboldt



Polycarpe Leyser, 1732,  
*Vera Geographiae Methodo*

## **Paradigm 1 : Grounding political geography and political economy in natural knowledge**

Carl Ritter : « Each continent is like itself alone... each one was so planned and formed, with rivers, plains, mountains, etc. as to have its own special function in the progress of human culture", 1850

**= some kind of natural philosophy  
of European mountains**



# 18th century French Geography

Philippe  
Buache  
1754



Pl. 5. – Carte physique de l'Océan, par Philippe Buache, 1754, notice n° 16.



# Philippe Buache 1754



*« Nature has made her own divisions of the Globe from the beginning; it separated them from one another with barriers that neither time nor human inventions will never destroy.*

*But human beings did not recognize this natural division and they split land according to their ambitions. Contestations and wars between neighbors derive from this...*

*Lets indicate a separation plan which states respective belongings for ever... »*

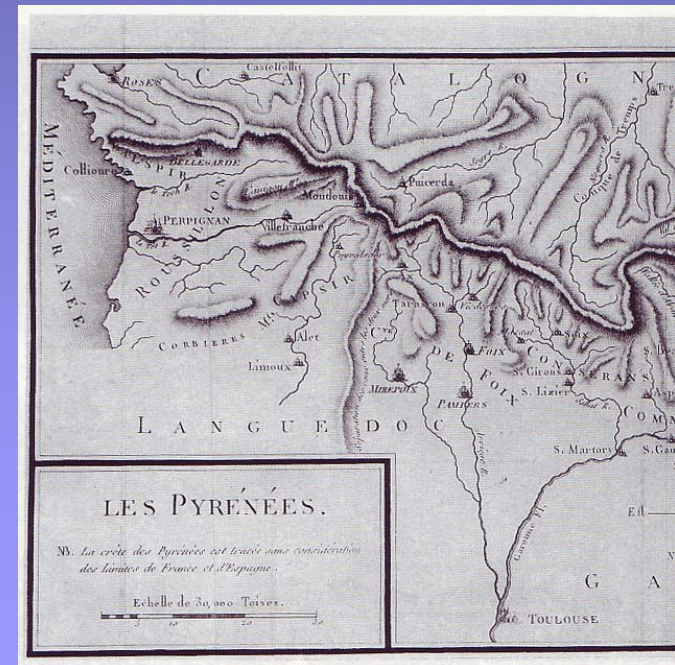
Buache de la Neuville, 1784



# The European continent, « the system of mountains » and the rise of modern Nation-States (1750-1918)

- Images (maps)
- Rational discourse : the natural order of mountains as a model for human action
- Set of rules and laws: State policies for putting major mountain ranges at their borders

= Paradigm.



## Paradigm 2: Welfare-States and the marginalized mountains (1945-1980's)

- many mountains at the periphery of modern states
- economic and cultural marginalisation
- authoritarian public policies for water and forest conservation and nature protection
- Sector-based policies for agriculture, tourism, etc.

= Welfare state principles. Necessity to minimize effects of marginalisation

Images – Rationale – Rules and Laws

## **YESTERDAY: What about mountains in the European Union building process ?**

= no clear paradigm related to mountains in the leading vision of Europe

# EU vision 1: To promote a post-national Europe = borders should be lowered

« People who freely communicate below rocks and glaciers can be proud to have leveled the Alps »  
Elisée Reclus,  
1868

INTERREG I and II

Mountains as a whole =  
not a relevant object.

**Liaison ferroviaire Lyon-Turin**

Depuis l'antiquité, les hommes, les idées et les marchandises traversent régulièrement les Alpes. A l'occasion du sommet franco-italien des 2 et 3 octobre 1997, le Comité de Promotion pour la liaison ferroviaire voyageurs et marchandises à grande vitesse Lyon-Turin réaffirme la nécessité de ce grand projet pour une plus grande ouverture de Rhône-Alpes, de la France et de l'Europe.

**Hannibal : 2 mois**

**Napoléon : 2 semaines**

**Lemercier : 2 heures**

**Avec la Transalpine, jamais les Alpes n'auront autant rapproché les hommes.**

**Transalpine**  
LYON - TURIN  
SAVOIE DU GRANDS

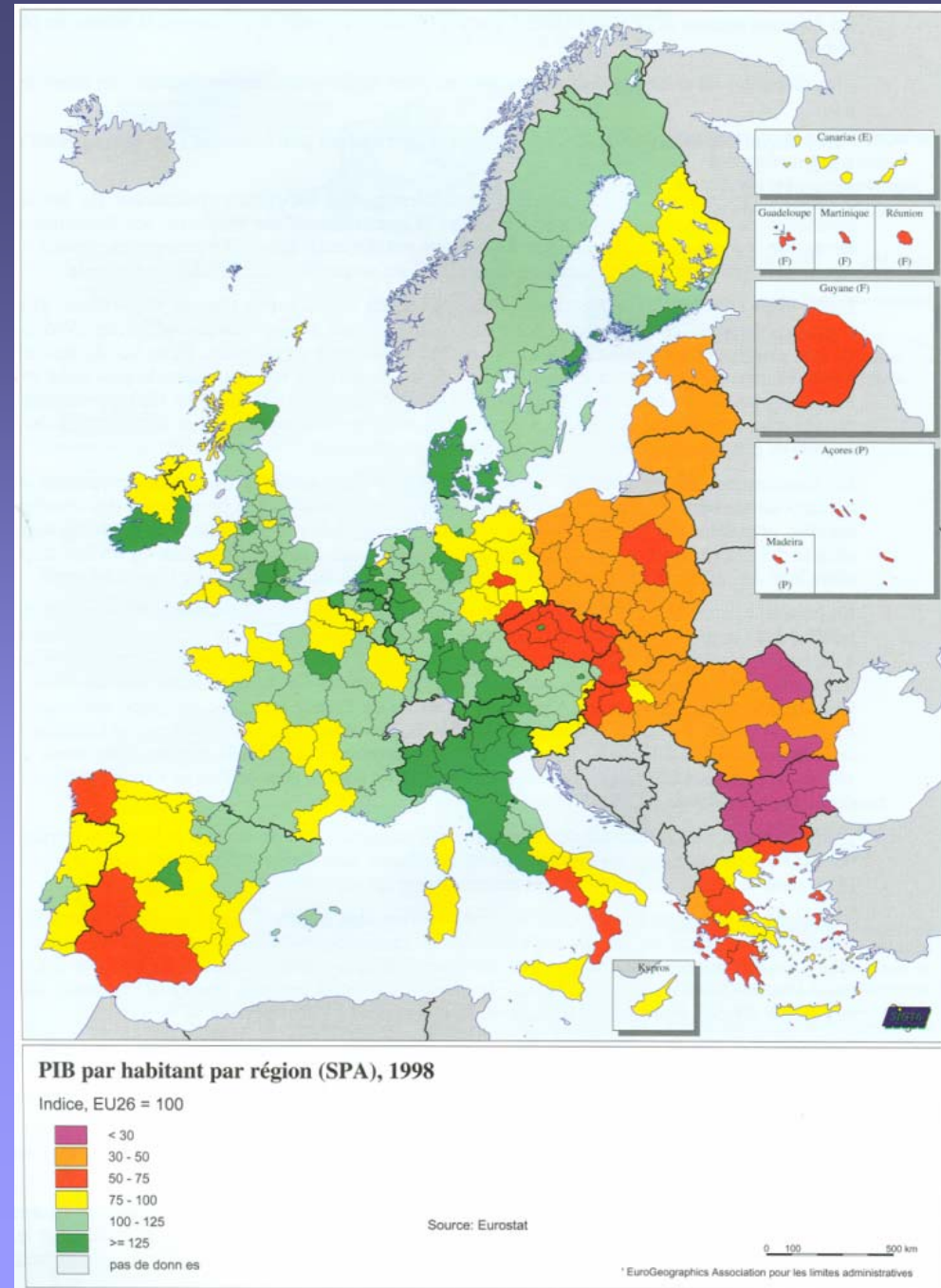
contact : 78, route de Paris - BP 19 - 69751 Charbonnières-les-Bains cedex - Tél. 04 72 59 51 56 / 51 23 - Fax. 04 72 59 51 90

groupement public

**EU vision 2: To  
promote social  
and economic  
cohesion =**

**Objectives 1 and 2**

Mountains as a whole =  
not a relevant object.





## **EU vision 3: To promote regional cooperation and project areas**

- Leader program
- Alpine Convention
- Carpathian Convention
- Etc.

Mountains as a whole = not a relevant object.

## Two European policies explicitly related to mountains

- CAP from 1975
- Nature conservation : Natura 2000 -  
The Wild Birds and Habitats Directives -  
959 natural sites protected in mountain  
areas

## TODAY : mountains in European policies and rhetoric

- Apology of biological and cultural diversity, Romano Prodi in "Common Policies and mountains" in Bruxelles, October 2002.
- Evolution of regional policy, Michel Barnier : Nordregio 2004 study
- European Union's Constitutional Treaty, 18 June 2004, Article III-220: *"Among the regions concerned, particular attention shall be paid to rural areas, areas affected by industrial transition, and areas which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps such as the northernmost regions with very low population density, and island, cross-border and mountain areas"*.
- But no effective consequence so far. Mountains as a whole = still not a relevant object.

## **TODAY : mountains in European policies and rhetoric**

Pr Johansson : « (from a demographic point of view) the mountain areas are mirrors of the situation of the situation in the nations where they belong »

- Several paradigms
- Several points of view on mountains even within European institutions : The European Economic and Social Committee, the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions, the Council of Europe, the European Commission
- Several delineations: CAP, Nordregio, Alpine Convention, etc.

## **TOMORROW**

**3 issues if a common paradigm related to mountains deserves to be built**

- Issue 1: To fill the gap between expert and juridical visions of mountains and inhabitants' ones.

Definition – delineation of mountains

Values associated with mountains

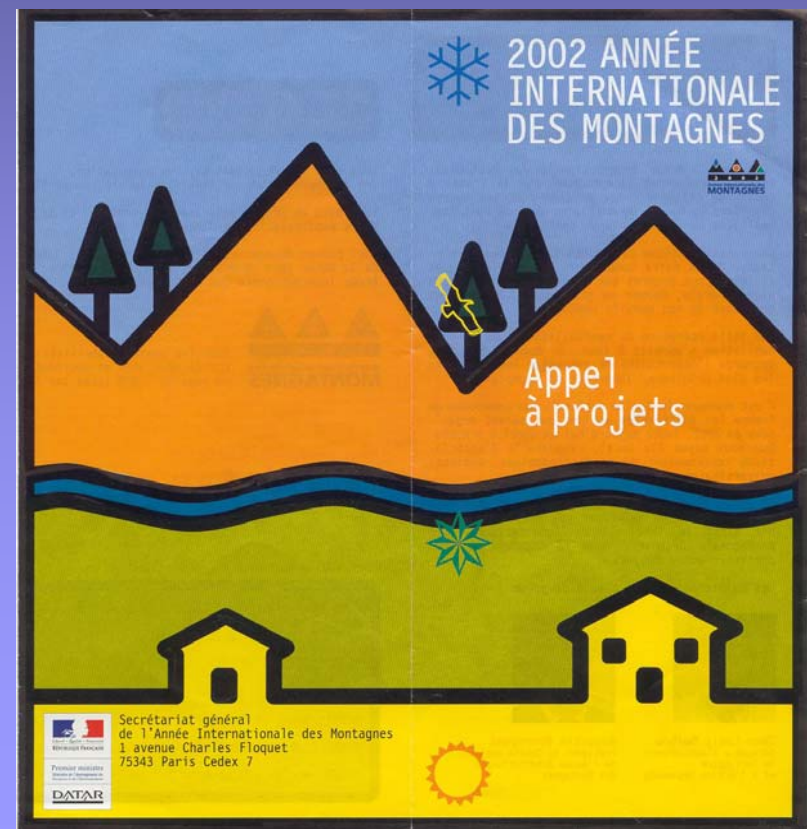
# TOMORROW

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### IYM 2002 in France:

- 400 local and regional projects
- Most of them motivated by cultural aims
- Many of them willing to weave ties with mountain people elsewhere in Europe and throughout the world

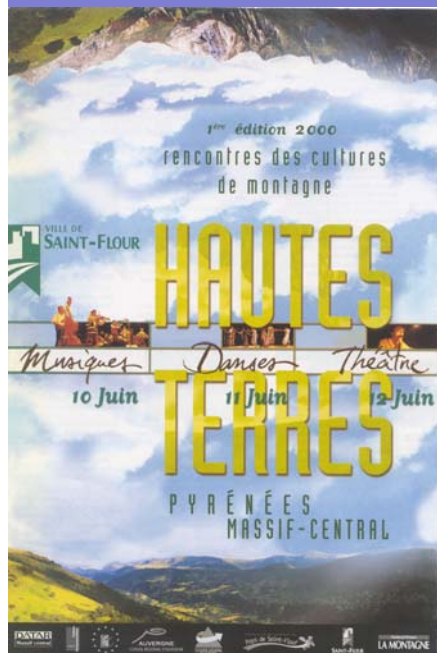


# TOMORROW

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## Mountain networks



Allianz in den Alpen



World Mountain Population Association

## **TOMORROW**

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- Issue 2: To adopt a common paradigm on European mountains



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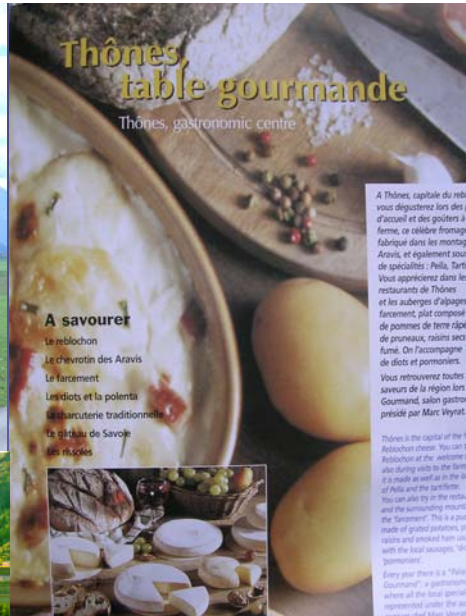
**Strong mountain characters in European cultural diversity**

**Mountains as a model for sustainable development policies**

**Political autonomy of mountain regions and European solidarity**

**Special quality of life and of environment in mountains**

# Cultural diversity





## **TOMORROW**

### **3 issues if a common paradigm related to mountains deserves to be built**

- Issue 2: To adopt a common paradigm on European mountains

#### **European Economic and Social Committee**

The future of upland areas in the EU

*"5.4.4 At a time when economic and environmental issues are becoming increasingly globalized, upland areas can offer a model of fair and sustainable development (...) This model should not only be preserved and safeguarded, but also promoted as a reference point both for other areas and at international level"*

## **TOMORROW**

**3 issues if a common paradigm related to mountains deserves to be built**

- Issue 1: To fill the gap between expert and juridical visions of mountains and inhabitants' ones.
- Issue 2: To adopt a common paradigm on European mountains
- Issue 3: To make information and data base a major tool for shared knowledge and collective action.

## **TOMORROW**

### **3 issues if a common paradigm related to mountains deserves to be built**

- Issue 3: To make information and data base a major tool for shared knowledge and collective action.

Information and data bases =  
a major and necessary tool of European institutions and experts.

- ✓ Not an exclusive expert prerogative
- ✓ To take in account indicators relevant for local people
- ✓ To ease the access and the use of data-base for building and implementing local and network projects.