HAL
open science

On mountain peasantry, public policies, and hope: development shaping the Alps

Gabriele Orlandi

To cite this version:

Gabriele Orlandi. On mountain peasantry, public policies, and hope: development shaping the Alps. EASA2022: Transformation, Hope and the Commons - 17th EASA Biennial Conference, European Association of Social Anthropologists / Association Européenne des Anthropologues Sociaux, Jul 2022, Belfast, United Kingdom. hal-03764225

HAL Id: hal-03764225

https://amu.hal.science/hal-03764225v1

Submitted on 30 Aug 2022

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

EASA BELFAST 2022

Institut d'Ethnologie Méditerranéenne Européenne et Comparative

fondation maison des sciences de l'homme

UNIVERSITÉ FRANCO ITALIENNE

UNIVERSITÀ ITALO FRANCESE

UNIVERSITÀ DI TORINO

Aix*Marseille université
Initiative d'excellence

On mountain peasantry, public policies, and hope: development shaping the Alps?

27th July 2022,
P0156

Gabriele Orlandi
Idemec / Aix-Marseille Université /
University of Turin

spatialising Stateness...

- (place-blind) promises of equality of treatment and opportunities sustain the discourses of modern bureaucratic nation-States
- Countryside as marginal/peripheral: submission, resistance, or negotiation?
- Rural development policies as sites of articulation between locality and abstraction
- Moving from Gramsci's theory, how development policies contribute in (re)produce and shape State as an historical experience, whilst producing heterogeneous trajectories at the "ground" level?

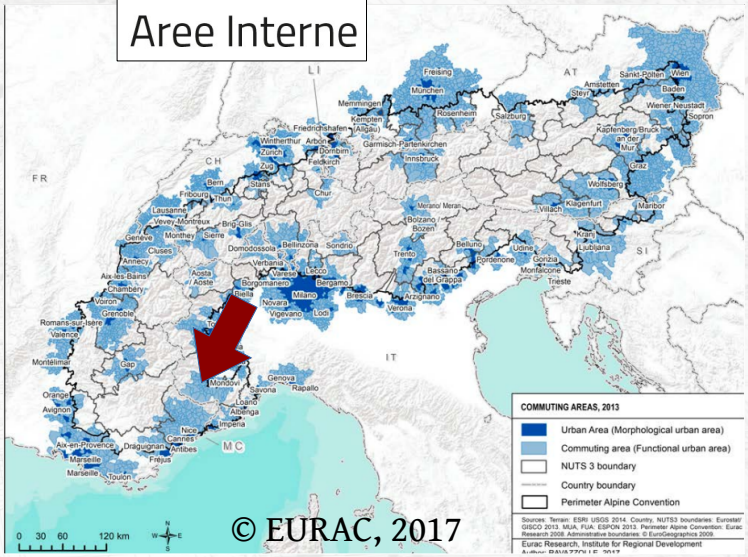
...from “below”

- Public policies as forms of planned social change:
  - How social engineering is designed and implemented?
  - How ordinary people cope with these forces?
  - How the articulation with the centre reconfigures positions in the local social space?
  - How public policies contribute in shaping the perception people have of their place within “the larger society”?

The Grana valley

Aree Interne

- multiple micro-ecologies
- *remote* and *traditional*, but…
- Quality food production (organic agriculture and PDO cheese) and outdoor tourism
- A National Plan for fragile areas not having matter so far? → schooling facilities, public transports, and infrastructure



"place-based policies and multilevel local governance (…) to counteract massive demographic exodus" (*Agenzia Coesione*, 2021)

A two-century-long history of improvements

- The « mountain question » in Italy dates back to the end of 19th century, related to the crisis of mountain farming and Alpine households ans was framed as an agricultural issue (« mountains are different »)

- In Grana valley, bureaucrats and technicians, looking at the mountain peasantry as isolated and backward, aimed to increase dairy and fodder production, by acting on local knowledge and attitudes

- Technical (fertilisers) , economic (cooperatives) and ecological (crops) transfers

Public institutions organising mountain economy

(1928)

(1975)

(1993)

(2001)

- Issue: involving mountain peasantry into more modern forms of production
- Recurrent non-achievements… but what about the big picture?

How economic events enter the collective memory?

- Epistemological, political, economic, and socio-technical arrangements produce regimes of judgement, converting implementation gaps in failures (Appadurai & Alexander 2019)

- Eclipsing the material conditions, people speak of:
  - Tiredness of social fabric
  - Inability to implement a real collective project for a qualitative leap
  - Lack of culture of collective work

- ... thus assimilating the vision of policy-makers and technicians

Public policies and local perceptions

- Demographic trends as measures of quality
- EU schemes, relying on tourism and territorial branding are stressing on the mountainous, traditional character of the area
  - *« right not to emigrate »* Vs *« out of the ghetto »*
- supra-local (e.g. European) institutions assess the value of endogenous action and social resources
- Whilst displaying mistrust toward public action and assessing the value of community (endogenous) action as “authentic”, people also point the many conflicts, disputes and competitions preventing a “successful development”

Unexpected outcomes…

- *« something has to be done »*
- State authority is contested on the basis that « mountains are different »
- Compelling to participate?
- From imperfect participation to non-institutional collective action

SÖFRAN
CONSORZIO DI PROMOZIONE TUTELA E VALORIZZAZIONE

In conclusion

- The idea of “mountain uniqueness” is rooted in the Italian public debate as well as in the local history of policy-making
- Development policies contribute to reshape the local imagery of the social world, especially with regard to the population-institutions relationship
- Even unstable and failed public policies have important social effects, especially when re-signified in the collective memory, producing patterns of social action and regimes of meaning that affect how future forms of social engineering are designed and implemented

Thank you for your attention !

gabriele.orlandi@yahoo.com