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**Sustainable Tourism and Public Policy in Europe:  
A Case Study of the Regional Nature Park of Auvergne  
Volcanoes, France**

**Submitted by:**

Pauline Chaussende  
Student number first university: 95090500000  
Student number second university: 950905-T265  
Contact details (telephone/email): +33631122052 /  
pauline.chaussende@hotmail.fr

**Supervised by:**

Name of supervisor first university: Dr Krzysztof Kowalski  
Name of supervisor second university: Prof. Lars Rudebeck

**Paris, June 17, 2019**

**Signature**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "P. Chaussende". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.



## **MA Programme Euroculture Declaration**

I, Pauline Chaussende, hereby declare that this thesis, entitled "Sustainable Tourism and Public Policy in Europe: A Case Study of the Regional Nature Park of Auvergne Volcanoes, France", submitted as partial requirement for the MA Programme Euroculture, is my own original work and expressed in my own words. Any use made within this text of works of other authors in any form (e.g. ideas, figures, texts, tables, etc.) are properly acknowledged in the text as well as in the bibliography.

I hereby also acknowledge that I was informed about the regulations pertaining to the assessment of the MA thesis Euroculture and about the general completion rules for the Master of Arts Programme Euroculture.

Signed

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Date

June 17, 2019

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## **Introduction**

“I’ve been covering all four corners of the country in connection with promoting sustainable tourism. So not only am I just travelling, I am travelling responsibly.”<sup>1</sup> This is what the famous Indian actress TV host and travel vlogger Shenaz Treasurywala declared as part of a sustainable tourism campaign. There is a growing awareness on the need to promote sustainable tourism worldwide. It seems that it is not only a trend spread by right-thinking influencers: in Europe, national, regional and local governments, as well as European institutions are constantly trying to develop coherent action in this regard. Implementing the values and principles of sustainability within the tourism field implies combining the socioeconomic goals of tourism and the ecological goals of nature conservation. The interest in sustainable tourism started in the 1970s and is now more and more included in the tourism industry. This is even more relevant in rural areas, where the balance between ecological, economic and social aspects can be hard to achieve, and where tourism stakeholders are trying to develop responsible alternatives.

French Regional Nature Parks (RNPs) were created in 1967 with biodiversity preservation purposes. They are among the most involved institutions in terms of sustainable tourism within rural territories. While their creation allows the enhancement of cultural and natural heritages both for locals and tourists, it also aims to benefit all other stakeholders. RNPs increase employment, promote tourism in remote places, and protect wildlife. Focusing on this context in remote areas is particularly interesting since it shows how the promotion of sustainable tourism in such areas has consequences for local people and, tourism stakeholders, but also for the attraction of visitors. The RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes, which is situated in one of the most rural regions of France, is the largest French RNP and is internationally renowned for its specific scenery: the Auvergne volcanoes. This outstanding natural heritage fascinates visitors and attracts more and more tourists. Therefore, this thesis aims to answer the following research question: How is the natural heritage of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes used as a tool to promote sustainable tourism on a regional scale within a European framework? The institutions responsible for the Park’s development have been quick to grasp the advantages of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes’ landscapes and are actively promoting them. This is how nature has begun to be commodified within the Park. Within tourism processes, Auvergne landscapes have

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<sup>1</sup> Deepthi Sreenivasan, "Bitten By The Travel Bug", Deccan Chronicle, 2017, <https://www.deccanchronicle.com/lifestyle/travel/270917/bitten-by-the-travel-bug-1.html> (accessed June 8, 2019).

become a marketable good able to boost local economy. In the meantime, the Park's natural heritage has become a useful tool to promote sustainable tourism.

### **Aim and relevance of the thesis**

Within this thesis, the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes has been studied as a case of the European RNPs system. The Park involves cultural, social and political elements that are related both to the European and French frameworks. It is thus a local example that needs to be considered in a European context. The main aim of this thesis is to discover how the promotion of sustainable tourism in the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes is done, with an emphasis on the natural heritage of the Park. This thesis focuses mainly on the Park as a cultural, natural and environmental heritage and investigates how its local landscapes are used to turn it into a saleable product within a European framework. The thesis also emphasizes the governance aspects of the Park through an analysis of the policies and planning documents guiding it. The role of the European Union, France and regional and local governments in sustainable tourism will be detailed in order to extend the readers' understanding of the influence of public policy on the development of sustainable tourism. The thesis implies interdisciplinary references involving the fields of political geography, economics, history, public policy, general tourism and sustainable tourism, sustainable development, law, sociology and landscape ecology. The societal relevance of the thesis is related to sustainable tourism, which requires a balance between environmental and economic aspects. But it also requires the inclusion of social sustainability. The promotion of sustainable tourism in the Park has an impact on local populations as well as on the tourists visiting it and all sustainable tourism stakeholders.

### **Research questions**

This thesis aims to provide answers to the following research questions:

- Are all stakeholders considered in the promotion of sustainable tourism within the Park?
- Is the sustainable tourism development strategy of the Park mainly shaped by a European framework?
- Is the promotion of sustainable tourism within the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes successful?
- Do the Park's managing institutions contribute to turn the Park's territory into a commodified heritage?

## Structure of the thesis

The thesis begins with a theoretical and conceptual chapter in order to clarify the meaning of the key terms referred to all along the text. In Chapter 1, the link between nature, culture and natural heritage will be explained. Sustainable tourism will be defined, as well as Regional Nature Parks, both in Europe and specifically in France. Finally, in order to extend the understanding of the core aspects dealt with while giving some references to the geographical research area, the concepts of landscape commodification and the relation between capitalism and nature commodification will be explained.

The following chapter focuses on the Park's landscape in order to show its influence on local communities' identities. Chapter 2 aims to demonstrate in which ways landscape can be considered both as an exploitable and as an exploited resource. In this way, this chapter shows how landscape can define the existence of the territory or increase its visibility thanks to its specificity. Indeed, landscape becomes an identification tool of the territory and the people it hosts. A territory can be referred to according to its geographical and visual aspect. Geographic features can also be used to increase the territory's visibility. Therefore, the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' territory is of paramount importance since it contributes to increase the Park's visibility. Public policy in relation to the territory and natural heritage will be explored through an analysis of the 2013-2025 Park's charter and the 2017 activity report of the *Syndicat Mixte*, which is the Park's managing institution.

Chapter 3 focuses on the European framework for the promotion of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' local natural heritages. This chapter introduces the European initiatives that were launched in relation to the environment preservation. It aims to explain the relation between the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes and the European Union. Policy-making plays a major role regarding environment preservation within RNPs, and this chapter introduces various European instruments such as The European Landscape Convention, the project "Europe's Nature, Regional and Landscapes Parks"<sup>2</sup>, the First European Summit of Regional Nature Parks, the implementation and animation of Natura 2000 sites, and the European Charter for Sustainable

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<sup>2</sup> "Europe's Nature Parks, Landscape Parks and Regional Parks: A Project to Share Knowledge and Experience", european-parks.org, <https://www.european-parks.org/about-the-project/course-of-the-project> (accessed May 2, 2019).

Tourism in Protected Areas. The European share of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' budgetary and financial management will also be detailed in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4 aims to identify the main challenges regarding sustainable tourism and the deliberate promotion of the Park's natural heritage. Sustainable tourism implementation sometimes faces obstacles linked to the people's discontent. The preparatory thesis research led to an identification of four major challenges: ecotourism versus mass tourism, nature-based tourism challenges within the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes, the need to reconcile conflicts of interests and, the promotion of the Park, evolving from a state of nature to a state of saleable product while attracting large numbers of tourists.

## **Methodology**

A qualitative approach has been used throughout this thesis. It is mainly based on a case study of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes, including systematic analysis of relevant documents and semi-structured interviews with two key informants. Official public policy documents have been studied and analysed to provide a better understanding of the Park's management from a legal and institutional perspective. The two key documents in regard to the Park are the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' 2013-2025 charter and the 2017 activity report of the *Syndicat Mixte*. Other official documents have also been analysed, such as the European Landscape Convention and the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism. Several legal documents were also studied as part of upstream research, such as Natura 2000 legislation (involving the Birds and Habitat Directives) and legislation on hunting in preserved areas. The content of VolcanSancy Tourist Office's website has also been analysed to understand how the Park's natural heritage is promoted. Other official websites related to the Park have been partly analysed: The UNESCO Natural Heritage website, the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' website, and Vulcania's website. The methods used to get this thesis executed focused mainly on policymaking regarding sustainable tourism and environment preservation and on the implementation of official policy within the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. However, the first part of the thesis, focuses on scholarly studies on strategic tourism planning, sustainable tourism public policy, landscape policy, etc., in order to provide a better understanding of the thesis' framework and contextualize the concepts involved in the research. Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 also aim to provide historical and literary elements related to the Park.

Two semi-structured interviews with key respondents were conducted in order to understand the Park's promotional strategy and the main challenges and issues linked to sustainable tourism in the Park. In order to do so, Robert K. Yin's methods about case study research<sup>3</sup> have been followed. The interviewees were Judith Dumons, the Director of VolcanSancy Tourist Office, and Eve Alcaide, the Sustainable Economy sector Manager of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes. They were selected because they belong to institutions that are directly related to sustainability and/or tourism and promotional activities on the Park's territory. In order to understand each interviewee's point of view, it is necessary to know that Eve Alcaide represents the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' *Syndicat Mixte* and that her tasks involve the management of sustainable rural development actions within the Park. On the contrary, Judith Dumons represents VolcanSancy Tourist Office, whose main objective is to promote the Park's territory without necessarily focusing on sustainability issues. Therefore, both interviewees have different interests which might explain discrepancies between their personal views.

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<sup>3</sup> Robert K Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2018), 117-121.

## **Chapter 1. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

This chapter aims to contextualise the research by giving a better understanding of the key terms and concepts that will be explored throughout the thesis. Both the terminology and the methodological approach applied to this research will be explained. Several concepts will be introduced, such as sustainable tourism, in order to know what it really implies and how it has evolved over time. Nature as a natural heritage will first be explored to introduce the concept of sustainable tourism. This chapter also defines the terms “Regional Nature Park”, which is the core concept of this paper, and explains the operation of the French RNPs. The commodification of natural heritages will then be explained, since it is directly linked to sustainable tourism in RNPs. Indeed, the promotion of sustainable tourism in the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes is related to the commodification of the Park’s landscape which is turned into a saleable product.

### **1.1 Nature, culture and natural heritage**

Interaction between nature and culture is a crucial feature of humankind, through history. The encounters of historical and literature figures with nature resulted in a vast range of responses. When Petrarch climbed Mont Ventoux on April 26, 1336, he was fascinated by the view from the top of the French mountain but was fearing a decrease in intensity of his devotion to God as a consequence of his admiration for nature. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the hero of a German Baroque novel, Simplicius Simplicissimus experienced the same feeling after reaching the height of the Black Forest in southern Germany. Over centuries, history shows that another relationship between culture and nature has also emerged. Far from the fear of turning against God, people began to use nature in order to satisfy the lust for power and knowledge. This was the case in contexts of conquests, such as during the exploration of the New World. Culture and history have left their imprints on nature in many cases: John Winthrop and his colonist companions gave familiar names to the natural sights they discovered in North America.<sup>4</sup> In specific cultures, mountains, volcanoes and natural heights were often associated to Gods while spring and blooming used to represent fertility, etc. There is also a culture of nature writing in literature. Dana Philips finds that “when [authors] refer to *nature writing*, they usually have in mind a nonfiction prose essay describing a first-person narrator’s efforts to establish an

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<sup>4</sup> Gunther Barth, *Fleeting Moments* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), XIII.

intensely felt emotional connection with the natural world.”<sup>5</sup> Therefore, it is clear that the relationship between people and nature has led to the emergence of religious and cultural symbols, and that nature is related to culture.

Regarding the link between nature, culture and heritage, Heyd outlines that “heritage” must be understood and explained in contrast to “inheritance”. According to him, both terms refer to something coming from the past and being legitimately enjoyed by one or several persons in the present. However, heritage refers to something fundamentally shared by all the people belonging to, for instance, a nation or an affinity group in particular. Therefore, Heyd defines heritage as “the stock of valued goods passed on from the past to the present; the integrity of which is to be protected, possibly to be enjoyed and to be augmented, but not to be used up, before being passed on to the future.”<sup>6</sup> Natural heritage conservation is deeply linked to the “culture of nature”. A culture of nature can imply that one should act on nature in order to develop it but not suppress it. Protecting an area can be seen as a way to act on nature that allows its free development within the protected area’s boundaries.

Nature and culture are often considered as opposites whereas the notion of “cultural landscapes” does exist. In the 1990s, “cultural landscapes” were included in the World Heritage Convention as a category for protection. “Natural heritage” and “cultural heritage” were even associated in the Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage that was adopted on November 16, 1972 by the General Conference of UNESCO.<sup>7</sup> The protection of cultural and natural heritage is not a new trend. In most parts of the world, governments on a national, regional, and local scale have significantly increased efforts to preserve both their natural resources and their cultural heritage. However, the natural resource and cultural protection regimes used to work separately until activists, regulators and scholars started to recognize the links between both areas, which is relatively recent.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Dana Phillips, *The Truth of Ecology: Nature, Culture, and Literature in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 185.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Heyd, "Nature, Culture, and Natural Heritage", *Environmental Ethics* 27, no. 4 (2005): 339-340, doi:10.5840/enviroethics20052742.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Carlarne Cinnamon Piñon, "Putting the 'and' Back in the Culture-Nature Debate: Integrated Cultural and natural heritage protection", *UCLA Journal of Environmental Law & Policy* 25, no. 1 (2007): 154-155, [https://heinonline-org.ezproxy.its.uu.se/HOL/Page?collection=journals&handle=hein.journals/uclalp25&id=153&men\\_tab=srchresults](https://heinonline-org.ezproxy.its.uu.se/HOL/Page?collection=journals&handle=hein.journals/uclalp25&id=153&men_tab=srchresults) (accessed January 26, 2019).

The motivation for designating natural areas as world heritage sites came from the conviction that the few places left in a state of pure and untouched nature should be preserved in their original aspect. However, this conviction has been questioned in the last few decades. Indeed, some, such as Bill McKibben, say that nature does not exist anymore because most parts of the planet's surface and atmosphere have been affected by human activity and climate change.<sup>9</sup> Others argue that the natural areas that have been modified by human activity have greater biodiversity than the ones which remain untouched. In addition, others claim that nature is a cultural construct, and therefore, is arbitrary in the European culture, at least: "some have supposed that distinctions between the natural and the nonnatural play into a noxious kind of duality, implicated in oppressive, patriarchal, and colonial power relations."<sup>10</sup> Finally, some people also argue that true nature must be "free" and that separating some sites as protected areas that are being fenced in, closely observed and managed is not natural.<sup>11</sup> However, many places have already been culturally changed and this may help the flourishing of natural qualities that would not be evident or perceived otherwise and contribute to a sustainable development of the land.

## 1.2 Sustainable tourism

Tourism takes many different shapes. One way of considering it is to view it as an instrument contributing to increase the sustainable development of rural areas. This is what this section aims at developing. In order to understand the concept of sustainable tourism, both terms "tourism" and "sustainable" will be defined.

There is no definition of the term "tourism" that has been universally adopted or accepted. However, following the International Conference on Travel and Tourism Statistics held in Ottawa, Canada (June 1991), a definition was adopted and ratified by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 1993: "Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and

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<sup>9</sup> McKibben, Bill in Thomas Heyd, "Nature, Culture, and Natural Heritage", *Environmental Ethics* 27, no. 4 (2005): 342, doi:10.5840/enviroethics20052742.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Heyd, "Nature, Culture, and Natural Heritage", *Environmental Ethics* 27, no. 4 (2005): 339-340, doi:10.5840/enviroethics20052742.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year, for leisure, business, and other purposes.”<sup>12</sup>

Studies focusing on the history of tourism reveal that tourism is a very ancient concept. Young men from the upper class were usually expected to travel on a “grand tour” through Europe from ancient Rome to the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>13</sup> The use of the term “tourism”, however, is more recent than leisure travel. The word “hospitality” was first used in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and comes from the Latin word *hospes* which can be translated as “guest”, “foreigner”, or “host”. The word “tourism” only appeared in print in 1772<sup>14</sup>. According to William Theobald, the words “tourism” and “tourist” and their root *tour* derive from Greek and Latin words meaning “circle” and “turn”. Therefore, Theobald considers that tourism means circling away from home, and then coming back (more precisely – returning)<sup>15</sup>.

The adjective “sustainable” is usually associated to the noun “development”. It can be defined as a development causing very few damage to the environment and therefore, being able to be implemented over a long period of time. Sustainable tourism is a “development that meets the needs of the present while safeguarding Earth’s life-support system, on which the welfare of current and future generations depends.”<sup>16</sup> According to Allan Beaver, sustainable tourism can be defined as a “concept of tourism development that preserves and harmonizes with the pre-existing economic, social/cultural, and ecological situation, and has a negligible, minimal, or the least possible effect on the pre-existing economic, social/cultural, and ecological situation.”<sup>17</sup> However, “negligible, minimal, or the least possible” can be understood according to different standards. Wide differences may be found, therefore, depending on the perspective.

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<sup>12</sup> Allan Beaver, "Tourism", in *A Dictionary of Travel and Tourism* (Oxford University Press, 2012), <http://www.oxfordreference.com.ezproxy.its.uu.se/view/10.1093/acref/9780191733987.001.0001/acref-9780191733987> (accessed February 19, 2019).

<sup>13</sup> Edward Chaney, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour: Anglo-Italian Cultural Relations Since the Renaissance* (Routledge, 2000).

<sup>14</sup> Ralph Griffiths, "Pennant's Tour in Scotland in 1769", *The Monthly Review; or, Literary Journal* 46 (1772): 150, [https://books.google.ca/books?id=xS8oAAAYAAJ&vq=tourist&dq=tourist&pg=PA150&redir\\_esc=y&hl=fr#v=onepage&q=tourist&f=false](https://books.google.ca/books?id=xS8oAAAYAAJ&vq=tourist&dq=tourist&pg=PA150&redir_esc=y&hl=fr#v=onepage&q=tourist&f=false) (accessed February 19, 2019).

<sup>15</sup> William F. Theobald, *Global Tourism*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, England: Butterworth–Heinemann, 1998), 6-7.

<sup>16</sup> David Griggs et al., "Sustainable Development Goals for People and Planet", *Nature* 495, no. 7441 (2013): 306, doi:10.1038/495305a.

<sup>17</sup> Allan Beaver, "Sustainable Tourism", in *A Dictionary of Travel and Tourism* (Oxford University Press, 2012), <http://www.oxfordreference.com.ezproxy.its.uu.se/view/10.1093/acref/9780191733987.001.0001/acref-9780191733987> (accessed February 19, 2019).

Going back to the first researches on this topic, we discover that tourism researchers began to take an interest in sustainable tourism in the 1970s (Turner & Ash<sup>18</sup>, Smith<sup>19</sup>, Young<sup>20</sup>). This reveals that the interest in a kind of responsible tourism is relatively recent. In most scholarly studies, sustainable tourism is usually associated to mass tourism. These terms are complementary. At first, sustainable tourism was an ecologically oriented concept developed to fight against unrestricted mass tourism and unlimited growth.<sup>21</sup> However, Beaver considers that defining mass tourism as a tourism which is not sustainable, is not correct.<sup>22</sup> According to him, mass tourism, or large-scale tourism requires an appropriate infrastructure to support a considerable number of tourists. Developing a tourist place with such an infrastructure may make tourism sustainable in this particular area, by providing employment and boosting local economy while respecting the environment.<sup>23</sup>

Since the environmental aspect of tourism has been increasingly taken into account, a variety of concepts and terms related to sustainable tourism have emerged. The most commonly associated concept to sustainable tourism is “ecotourism”. Ecotourism used to be a marketing tool. Tourism and marketing experts considered that “green” was marketable and “eco” sounded like “big business”<sup>24</sup>. Governments have encouraged the development of ecotourism policies and strategies because it is considered as an income and job generator and thus contributes to an effective regional development. Conservationists and environmentalists have adopted another approach towards the concept of ecotourism. They see it as a way to promote sustainable management and conservation that could be applied to the whole tourism industry, not just to protected areas<sup>25</sup>. In the 1990s, a new vision of ecotourism emerged. It was considered as the right balance between nature-based tourism and sustainable tourism, meaning that the ecological, social, and economic aspects of tourism must be considered jointly<sup>26</sup>. Thus,

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<sup>18</sup> Louis Turner and John Ash, *The Golden Hordes* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976).

<sup>19</sup> Valene L. Smith, *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978).

<sup>20</sup> George Young, *Tourism, Blessing or Blight?* (repr., Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, 1973).

<sup>21</sup> Christof Pforr, "Concepts of Sustainable Development, Sustainable Tourism, and Ecotourism: Definitions, Principles, and Linkages", *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* 1 (2001): 68-71, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.its.uu.se/10.1080/15022250127788> (accessed February 19, 2019).

<sup>22</sup> Allan Beaver, "Mass Tourism", in *A Dictionary of Travel and Tourism* (Oxford University Press, 2012), <http://www.oxfordreference.com.ezproxy.its.uu.se/view/10.1093/acref/9780191733987.001.0001/acref-9780191733987> (accessed February 19, 2019).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

<sup>24</sup> Kreg Lindberg and Bob Mc Kercher, "Ecotourism: A Critical Overview.", *Pacific Tourism Review*, 1 (1997): 65-79.

<sup>25</sup> Karen A. Ziffer, *Ecotourism: The Uneasy Alliance* (Washington: Ernst and Young, 1989).

Elizabeth Boo, *Ecotourism: The Potentials and Pitfalls* (Washington: World Wildlife Fund, 1990).

<sup>26</sup> Ecotourism Working Group, *Ecotourism as a Conservation Instrument? Making Conservation Projects More Attractive* (Köln: Weltforum Verlag, 1995).

the relationship between sustainable tourism, sustainable development and ecotourism becomes evident.

Sustainable tourism is complex because it is directly related to local resources (nature, culture...) and to an economic aspect. Indeed, local communities from tourism destinations are tied to an economic impact dependent on the resources available on their land that form an attraction base. Sustainable tourism involves local communities, but also tourists and tourism managers from tourism destinations. Therefore, it is an essential concern from a social perspective, but also from an economic and environmental perspective. A political dimension can be noticed in several definitions of sustainable tourism. For instance, D. W. Pearce and R. R. Turner define sustainable tourism as a concept involving “maximizing and optimally distributing the net benefits of economic development [...] while establishing and reaffirming the conditions of security under which the services and qualities of natural resources can be maintained, restored or improved into the foreseeable future.”<sup>27</sup> Implementing sustainable tourism measures requires the involvement of scientists, tourism experts, economists, but also policymakers, governments and non-governmental organisations. Visitors and locals are also bound to comply with these measures that concern, among others, economic viability, local prosperity, social equity and visitor fulfillment. These stakeholders allow the creation of technologies, management measures and environmental policies contributing to reducing several tourism impacts<sup>28</sup>. At a larger scale, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) is the United Nations agency in charge of the “promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism”<sup>29</sup>

### **1.3 European Regional Nature Park**

A Nature Park is a government recognised or designated protected landscape usually located in a rural area, that is promoted for tourism purposes. Its objective is to protect nature and landscapes as well as its habitats and species. Its protection is ensured by sustainable use and agriculture, and long-term planning. RNPs exist in several European countries, in which they

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<sup>27</sup> David W Pearce and R. Kerry Turner, *Economics of Natural Resources and The Environment* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990).

<sup>28</sup> Ralf Buckley, "Evaluating the Net Effects of Ecotourism on the Environment: A Framework, First Assessment and Future Research", *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 17, no. 6 (2009): 643-672, doi:10.1080/09669580902999188.

<sup>29</sup> United Nations World Tourism Organization, *Who we are*, <http://www2.unwto.org/content/who-we-are-0> (accessed February 23, 2019).

cover up to 25% of the land<sup>30</sup>. Within each European country, the size of RNPs is at least 3,000 – 5,000 ha. They are either managed by their own dedicated administration or office, or by a regional organisation managing various protected areas in a given region.<sup>31</sup> The RNPs are based on four pillars, which are also their main objectives that they aim to achieve in cooperation with regional actors, local authorities, as well as the population:

- Conservation, protection of biological diversity and preservation and further development of a landscape shaped by sustainable use,
- Sustainable tourism and recreation,
- Sustainable development of rural areas,
- Environmental education and education for sustainable development.<sup>32</sup>

It must be noted that RNPs are different from National Parks, whose chief objective is nature conservation but are established by a central state decision and characterized by less human influence<sup>33</sup>.

#### **1.4 French Regional Nature Park**

A Regional Natural Park is defined by the Fédération des Parcs Naturels Régionaux de France (France's Federation of Regional Natural Parks) as “an inhabited rural area that is nationally recognised for its valuable local heritage and landscape, but also for its fragility. Such parks lean on extensive sustainable development plans allowing the protection and promotion of their resources”<sup>34</sup>. The French RNP is a tool built upon social capital and natural amenities enabling environmental protection, spatial planning, and territorial development<sup>35</sup>.

In order to understand how the French RNPs came into being, it is necessary to trace the origins of the first measures aiming at protecting remarkable natural sites as well as fragile ecosystems in France. The earliest measures were implemented in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1861,

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<sup>30</sup> Europe’s Nature Regional Landscape Parks, *What Is a Regional Natural Park*, <https://www.european-parks.org/about-the-project/what-is-a-nature-regional-landscape-park> (accessed February 23, 2019).

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Nigel Dudley, *Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories* (Gland: World Conservation Union, 2008).

<sup>34</sup> Fédération des Parcs Naturels Régionaux de France, *What Is a Regional Natural Park*, <http://www.parcs-naturels-regionaux.fr/article/what-regional-natural-park>, section 1 (accessed February 23, 2019).

<sup>35</sup> Cremer-Schulte Dominik & Dissart Jean-Christophe, *Evaluating rural development in French Regional Nature Parks*, *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 58:3, 383-403, 2015.

the first artistic preserve was created: the *Réserve artistique de la forêt de Fontainebleau* (Fontainebleau forest), two decades before the *Loi sur la restauration des terrains de montagne* (Mountain Land Rehabilitation Law),<sup>36</sup> in 1882. The 20<sup>th</sup> century marks a turning point with the foundation of the Bérarde Park, the first French park, created in 1913, only a few years after the *Loi sur la protection des sites de caractère pittoresque et artistique* (Law on the protection of picturesque and artistic sites) (1906)<sup>37</sup>. However, it was only after World War Two that the initiatives of conservationist groups were having a real impact, due to the industrial expansion and urbanisation and their ecological consequences. Two national parks were then created in 1963: Port-Cros and Vanoise Parks.<sup>38</sup> The creation of RNPs by decree dates from 1967. Since then, the French state has created a conservation system including today ten National Parks, fifty-three RNPs, around ten Marine Parks and several dozens of smaller reserves. Some protected areas within this system are classified under European Directives, whereas others have been created on the local level by public or private agencies.

The French RNP instrument, also designed as a conservation institution was created by the national spatial planning agency (DATAR), as a tool combining the supervision and monitoring of the entire local heritage, culture and nature.<sup>39</sup> The purpose of these parks is to implement a kind of sustainable development that respects both natural and human systems. As mentioned above, since RNPs are populated, they could not be managed with the same strict protection standards that are applied to national parks. RNPs can be described as a kind of exceptional administration due to their features. Indeed, they are characterized both by their pioneering sustainability (a balance between environmental protection and territorial development) and their decentralised regulation. RNPs result from a bottom-up process in which the French Environment Ministry allows the creation of a new park following an application submitted by regional and local institutions. In other words, the initiative comes from the local level and is approved on a central level. Thus, RNPs are subject to a multi-level regulation: they are regulated by a common law for all French RNPs but are also managed on

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<sup>36</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all translations in this paper are my own.

<sup>37</sup> Constanza Parra, "The Vicissitudes of The French Regional Park Model Illustrated Through the Life History of The Morvan", *Environment And History* 18, no. 4 (2012): 561-583, doi:10.3197/096734012x13466893037143.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid

<sup>39</sup> Cremer-Schulte Dominik & Dissart Jean-Christophe, *Evaluating rural development in French Regional Nature Parks*, *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 58:3, 383-403, 2015, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09640568.2013.859571> (accessed February 17, 2019).

a local level through a charter that is valid for twelve years. This charter is specific to each park and defines the responsibilities of its signatories. It also stipulates the park's main projects.<sup>40</sup>

The projects embodied in the charter “usually aim at rural diversification, promotion of local produce as well as local identity and visitor attraction and build on both natural heritage and social capital.”<sup>41</sup> Each partner of the charter can negotiate the park's perimeter, which is eventually defined according to the communes that have ratified the document. The region in which the park is situated leads the negotiation “assisted by the départements, the inter-communal institutions and communes, together with associations, professional organisations and devolved state services”<sup>42</sup>. The park members benefit from the right to use the *Parc Naturel Régional* labelling, a closer association to projects implemented on a state or local level, technical help to comply with the projects defined by the charter and some funding (from the European Union, the state or the regions) to ensure that these projects are carried out.<sup>43</sup>

The RNPs are directed by joint associations called *Syndicats Mixtes*. They comprise both elected representatives and officials from regional and local levels, as well as a scientific committee advising the political team. The main task of these associations is to recruit a technical team and a Director who will then supervise the park's operation. Among the actions that are run by the *Syndicat Mixte* are, for instance, the labelling of farm products and the promotion of local knowledge and traditional crafts to promote territorial identity within the park area.

## 1.5 Commodification of the landscape

The European Landscape Convention (Treaty No. 176) was open for signature by the Council of Europe's member states in 2000 and its preamble stipulates that “the landscape has an important public interest role in the cultural, ecological, environmental and social fields, and

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<sup>40</sup> Constanza Parra, "Sustainability and Multi-Level Governance of Territories Classified as Protected Areas in France: The Morvan Regional Park Case", *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management* 53, no. 4 (2010): 491-509, doi:10.1080/09640561003737341.

<sup>41</sup> Cremer-Schulte & Dissart Jean-Christophe, *Evaluating rural development in French Regional Nature Parks*, *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 58:3, 384, 2015, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09640568.2013.859571> (accessed February 17, 2019).

<sup>42</sup> Constanza Parra, "Sustainability and Multi-Level Governance of Territories Classified as Protected Areas in France: The Morvan Regional Park Case", *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management* 53, no. 4 (2010): 498, doi:10.1080/09640561003737341.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

constitutes a resource favourable to economic activity and whose protection, management and planning can contribute to job creation”<sup>44</sup>. Thus, it is evident that landscapes can provide an economic base for economic growth defined by market criteria.

A commodified landscape can be described as a territory that is being managed in order to increase tourist expenditure and whose natural and cultural environment is thus commercialised.<sup>45</sup> The commodification of nature has really drawn the attention of scholars since the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Daily<sup>46</sup>; Anderson and Leal<sup>47</sup>; Pagiola, Bishop and Landell-Mills<sup>48</sup>). In 2007, a process was launched by environment ministers from the G8+5 countries to value ecosystems as services. The aim of this process was based on the study of the following features: “analyzing the global economic benefit of biological diversity, the costs of the loss of biodiversity and the failure to take protective measures versus the costs of effective conservation”<sup>49</sup>. This is how the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB), an initiative backed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was created. That study was first launched as a global cost-benefit analysis of biodiversity and then became an instrument aiming at creating new environmental markets.<sup>50</sup> Three years later, in 2010, TEEB produced its first synthesis report and a fresh boost concerning “neoliberal commodification and financialisation of ecosystems”<sup>51</sup> could be observed.

Several economic theories directly linked to TEEB show that nature can be seen as a product that can be sold and bought to increase corporate profits. For instance, the so-called economics of optimal extinction’s basic assumption is that any land providing ecosystem or species services, such as a protected area, can be used alternatively (for buildings roads, shopping malls or for farming or agro-forestry). However, the biodiversity offsetting system underlines the will to compensate financially for the biodiversity losses linked to profit-based

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<sup>44</sup> ‘Details of Treaty No. 176, *European Landscape Convention*’, Treaty Office, Council of Europe Portal, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/176> (accessed February 20, 2019).

<sup>45</sup> Marion Markwick, "Alternative Tourism: Change, Commodification and Contestation of Malta's Landscapes", *Geography* 86 (2001): 251, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40573582> (accessed February 20, 2019).

<sup>46</sup> Gretchen C Daily, *Nature’s Services Societal Dependence on Natural Ecosystems* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1997).

<sup>47</sup> Terry L. Anderson and Donald R. Leal, *Free Market Environmentalism* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

<sup>48</sup> Stefano Pagiola, Joshua Bishop and Natasha Landell-Mills, *Selling Forest Environmental Services: Market-Based Mechanisms For Conservation And Development* (Earthscan Publications Ltd, 2002).

<sup>49</sup> ‘The Initiative’, The Economics of Ecosystems & Biodiversity, <http://www.teebweb.org/about/the-initiative/> (accessed January 16, 2019).

<sup>50</sup> Clive L. Spash, "Bulldozing Biodiversity: The Economics of Offsets and Trading-in Nature", *Biological Conservation* 192 (2015): 541, doi:10.1016/j.biocon.2015.07.037.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid

land use. According to this system, developers willing to implement a project on a land that is home to species and ecosystems must determine how the biodiversity might be affected by this proposed project in order to find a new location and re-create the same habitat on this new land. Long-term biodiversity improvements must be measured on the receptor site. It is thus evident that ecology and economy are linked and intertwined in specific ways in market economics and that they may come into conflict. The link between ecology and economy redefines human-Nature relationships<sup>52</sup>. Mann, Voß, Simons, Amelung and Runge argued that “the dominance of a neo-liberal imperative has led to the question of how to render ecological complexity in a form that is as abstract and transportable as a commodity.”<sup>53</sup>

## 1.6 Capitalism and nature commodification

The concept of commodification implies, both for Marxists and non-Marxists in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, that the commodity status is assigned and not intrinsic to things, objects, persons, creatures, etc. The concept of nature commodification and the relationship between human and nature has been extensively analysed by contemporary human geography scholars of a Marxist persuasion.<sup>54</sup> Marx himself did not focus specifically on nature: he mainly dealt with exchangeable goods in capitalism, which, according to him, acquire value through a displaced and alien form of social labour. Contemporary Marxists, like Karen J. Bakker<sup>55</sup>, Peter Dickens<sup>56</sup> and John Foster<sup>57</sup>, however, emphasized on nature’s commodification while focusing on specific concepts linked to capitalism, such as privatization, alienability, individuation, abstraction, etc.

The commodification of nature can be seen as a late consequence of neo-liberal capitalism since capitalism has to transform nature into a commodity to keep growing. From a capitalist perspective, all things that can be monetised can be used to increase economic growth. Therefore, a price can be put on nature and a market can then be identified for trade. The

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<sup>52</sup> Clive L. Spash, "Bulldozing Biodiversity: The Economics of Offsets and Trading-in Nature", *Biological Conservation* 192 (2015): 548-550, doi:10.1016/j.biocon.2015.07.037.

<sup>53</sup> Carsten Mann et al., *Challenging Futures of Biodiversity Offsets and Banking: Critical Issues for Robust Forms of Biodiversity Conservation* (Berlin: Technische Universität Berlin, 2015).

<sup>54</sup> Noel Castree, "Commodifying What Nature?", *Progress in Human Geography* 27, no. 3 (2003): 273-297, doi:10.1191/0309132503ph428oa.

<sup>55</sup> Karen J. Bakker, "Privatizing Water, Producing Scarcity: The Yorkshire Drought of 1995", *Economic Geography* 76, no. 1 (2000): 4-27, doi:10.2307/144538.

<sup>56</sup> Peter Dickens, "Linking the Social and Natural Sciences: Is Capital Modifying Human Biology in its Own Image?", *Sociology* 35, no. 1 (2001): 93-106, doi:10.1177/0038038501035001007.

<sup>57</sup> John Foster, *Valuing Nature?* (London: Routledge, 1997).

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, that was codified in 1973 and its aim is to ensure that international trade of species will not lead to their extinction<sup>58</sup>. The CITES multilateral treaty<sup>59</sup> can be seen not as a treaty implemented to protect nature, but rather as a way to enable international trade. Indeed, the treaty enforcement only depends on the will of the signatory countries to implement laws on a local level. In this sense, capitalism can be understood as an economic model constantly trying to find new markets and considering that anything can be used in a form of monetary trade.

In the case of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes, it was in 1964-1965, in a national context of economic growth and higher standards of living, that the idea to launch the Park was introduced by the department councils of Cantal and Puy-de-Dôme. At the time, the service sector, including tourism, was growing. It is interesting to notice in which ways the main goals of the Park have evolved over the decades. When the Park was created in 1977, the main objective included in the first Park's charter was to address the local demographic decline by promoting local resources. The next two charters focused on somewhat different goals involving mainly the protection of natural heritage and investments in the economic and social aspects of sustainable development.<sup>60</sup> It seems that the creation of the Park itself has not really met any kind of resistance. However, the project *Vulcania* has been challenged. *Vulcania* was launched in 1992 by the Auvergne Regional Council: the goal was to create a science park and a volcano museum that would be implanted on the Park's territory.<sup>61</sup> This was seen by *Vulcania*'s opponents as very capitalist initiative that would pollute the Park's groundwater. The elected socialists and ecologists also contested *Vulcania*'s budget that rose FRF 420 million in 1997. The project was supported and funded by the region, by loans, but also by state and European subsidies and *Vulcania* was finally implemented.<sup>62</sup>

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In order to understand better what sustainable tourism is, it is necessary to focus on the link between culture and nature that led to cultural changes in natural areas over time. Sustainable tourism is a rather modern concept that was first developed for ecological reasons and now

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<sup>58</sup> 'What Is CITES?', [cites.org](https://cites.org), <https://cites.org/eng/disc/what.php> (accessed March 23, 2019).

<sup>59</sup> IUCN The World Conservation Union, "Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora", 3 March 1973, <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/disc/CITES-Convention-EN.pdf> (accessed March 23, 2019).

<sup>60</sup> 'Parc des Volcans', Voyage dans le Parc des Volcans d'Auvergne, <https://parcdesvolcans.wixsite.com/parcdesvolcans40ans/parc-depuis-1977>, (accessed March 3, 2019).

<sup>61</sup> 'Vulcania', *Vulcania est né d'un rêve*, <https://www.vulcania.com/historique/> (accessed March 3, 2019).

<sup>62</sup> Sylvie O'Dy and Benjamin Sportouch, "Les volcans de Giscard", *L'express* du 14 août (1997), [https://www.lexpress.fr/informations/les-volcans-de-giscard\\_623874.html](https://www.lexpress.fr/informations/les-volcans-de-giscard_623874.html) (accessed March 13, 2019).

involves cultural, social, economic and natural aspects. The first measures aiming at protecting natural sites in Europe were implemented in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first French park was then created in 1913. In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, it became clear that landscapes could provide an economic base and would therefore be exchanged through the market. The RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes was created in 1977, in a national context of economic growth and its objectives have evolved from addressing the local demographic decline to protecting natural heritages and investing in the economic and social aspects of sustainable developments.

## Chapter 2. The Park's Landscape, an Exploitable and Exploited Territorial Resource

Landscapes are emblematic elements of territories which can shape local communities' identity. The landscape physiognomy allows human beings to judge the space around them and serves as a reference point to locate people. From a very young age, pupils are taught in school how to identify different kinds of landscapes (rural, urban, and mountainous landscapes coastlines, etc). Since landscape is a resource, it is used for profit but also to define the existence of a territory and increase its visibility thanks to its specificity. Landscapes can also be turned into heritage: this process originates from a social construct but is also framed by public policy. In the case of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes, the 2013-2025 Park's Charter and the 2017 activity report of the *Syndicat Mixte*<sup>63</sup> show how important the landscape, and the territory in general, is. These documents will be analysed in this chapter.

### 2.1 The landscape: an identification process of the territory

The landscape almost has a genetic role regarding the territory. It leads to the unification of a given territory and allows people to consider the latter as belonging to a particular kind. Indeed, the topography and skyline of Auvergne are determined by the presence of volcanoes. Therefore, while asking locals or tourists to describe the region, the adjective "mountainous" is automatically used. People tend to categorize territories according to the way landscape looks. These categorizations usually give rise to caricatures and stereotypes to define the land and its inhabitants and can be traced back. This is what the professor and researcher in Spanish civilisation Fausto Garasa has studied for several years. His work focuses on Aragon, which is an autonomous community located in the Northern part of Spain.<sup>64</sup> "At times, its uneven terrain and the infertility of its soils become, in the form of a metaphoric allusion, a steep and difficult path on the road towards righteousness."<sup>65</sup> The landscape of Aragon is usually associated with its inhabitants which are considered as honest and pure. In the same way, people from Auvergne are usually considered as rural, ignorant or uninformed. Indeed, Auvergne is visually perceived as a rural landscape with mountains, forests and fields. Its scarce population as well as its harsh winters makes outsiders believe that this seemingly inhospitable land and its inhabitants are cut

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<sup>63</sup> Syndicat Mixte du Parc Naturel Régional des Volcans d'Auvergne, "Rapport d'activités du Syndicat Mixte du Parc 2017 en application de la charte du Parc Naturel Régional des Volcans d'Auvergne adoptée en 2013", 2017.

<sup>64</sup> "À l'occasion, son relief accidenté et la stérilité de ses terres deviennent, sous forme d'évocation métaphorique, un chemin pentu et difficile sur la voie qui mène à la vertu", Fausto Garasa, "Territoire et identité en terres d'Aragon : stéréotypes, histoire et diversité", *Mémoire(s), identité(s), marginalité(s) dans le monde occidental contemporain*, no. 3 (2012), doi:10.4000/mimmoc.239. -

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

off from the outside world, and therefore ignorant. The writer Alexandre Vialatte emphasized the remoteness and rural nature of the region in describing Auvergne as follows: “Auvergne is an antique piece of furniture in poor art that France has relegated in the attic for a long time. It is laden with a smell of attic, ancient times, dream and smoke.”<sup>66</sup>

The way human beings perceive the land in which they live and its relation to their feelings, memories and culture connects them to their territory. The landscape fills the space with shapes, colours, smells, textures, and flavours. It also provides landmarks, signals and points of recognition.<sup>67</sup> According to the French researcher Pierre Dérioiz who specializes in the analysis of landscape dynamics, the landscape serves as recognition, identification and appropriation tool.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, the Auvergne volcanoes cannot be missed while entering the region and are spontaneously mentioned by locals and visitors when describing the area. But the volcanoes are not the only territorial clues to Auvergne. The landscape offers other peculiarities: anthracite-coloured towns, high and wide pastures, Roman churches of the Massif Central, etc. The RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes can be considered as part of a traditional landscape. According to a Geography researcher from Ghent University in Belgium, Marc Antrop, traditional landscapes usually are more coherent and stable than the post-modern ones. They have a more profound and distinct identity, that Antrop calls *genius loci*, the “spirit of place”.<sup>69</sup> In this kind of landscapes, there is an identification process between local people and their territory. The Italian and Belgian Geography researchers Rebekka Dossche, Elke Rogge and Veerle Van Eetvelde define landscape identity as “the result of the mutual interaction between landscape and people as joining concepts and [consider] spatial and existential identities having an inseparable connection.”<sup>70</sup> Being attached to a particular landscape can be felt individually or collectively. Collective landscape identity has been studied by the Spatial Sciences researchers from Groningen University Tialda Haartsen, Peter Groote and Paulus P.P. Huigen whose studies led to the conclusion that sharing a collective landscape identity unites

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<sup>66</sup> "L'Auvergne est un meuble pauvre que la France a relégué longtemps dans sa mansarde. Elle s'y est imprégnée d'une odeur de grenier, de vieux temps, de rêve et de fumée", Alexandre Vialatte in *Le Routard Auvergne* (Paris: Hachette, 2017), 13.

<sup>67</sup> Pierre Dérioiz, "Le paysage, une ressource territoriale emblématique mais ambiguë", *Montagnes Méditerranéennes*, no. 20 (2004): 159-160, <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00180493> (accessed March 23, 2019).

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Marc Antrop, "Where are the Genii Loci?" In Bas Pedroli, *Landscape, Our Home/Lebensraum Landschaft. Essays on The Culture of The European Landscape As a Task* (Zeist: Indigo, 2000), 29-34.

<sup>70</sup> Rebekka Dossche, Elke Rogge and Veerle Van Eetvelde, "Detecting People's and Landscape's Identity in a Changing Mountain Landscape. An Example from the Northern Apennines", *Landscape Research* 41, no. 8 (2016): 934-949, doi:10.1080/01426397.2016.1187266.

people while distinguishing them from others.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, it is clear that landscapes contribute to creating a sense of belonging.

Since a territory is geographically complex and can be divided into several parts, it is important to mention that there are different identities within one territory. In the case of France, the country is divided into regions which are themselves divided into departments. Auvergne is divided into four distinct departments: Allier in the northern part of the region, Puy-de-Dôme in the central part, Cantal in the south-western part, and Haute-Loire in the south-eastern part. On another sub-level, each department is divided into *pays*. Haute-Loire, for instance, contains different *pays*, such as Velay, Gévaudan, and Forez. The RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes is located on the Puy-de-Dôme and Cantal departments. Therefore, local people living on the Park territory can identify as *Cantalous* or *Puydomois* on a small scale, but also as Auvergnats, French, or even European. An identity is always constructed in relation to otherness, therefore the sense of belonging of local people varies depending on their interlocutor. Murat and Salers are two towns located on the Park's territory. Their respective inhabitants would identify themselves as *Muratais* or *Sagraniers* in relation to the other. What if a *Muratais*, whose home department is Cantal, meets an individual from Haute-Loire? He would then call himself a *Cantalous* switching from the town scale to the department one. While meeting someone from another region, like Bretagne, the *Cantalous* would become an *Auvergnat*. The same observation could probably be made if he met a German or a Belgian: he would then call himself a French. Thus, an individual has a multi-level identity, or even several identities, depending on the geographical scale. The geographical division of a territory is also related to power, which is why geography and politics are intertwined. This is what the Senior Lecturer in Geography at the University of Worcester David Storey has examined:

The origins of the word *territory* can be traced back to medieval times. In the Roman era, the word *territorium* was associated with both community and territory. Slowly, the idea of owing allegiance to the territory began to supersede allegiance to a lord, or to God. Wars were to be fought in the name of territorial formations.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Tialda Haartsen, Peter Groote and Paulus P.P. Huigen, "Claiming Rural Identities", *Journal of Rural Studies* 18, no. 1 (2002): 109-111, doi:10.1016/s0743-0167(01)00021-3.

<sup>72</sup> David Storey, *Territories, The Claiming of Space* (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 2.

The control of territories has become the geographical expression of political power.<sup>73</sup> However, there are no publicly known identity conflicts or power struggle within Auvergne, but each land division and sub-division has its own cultural and traditional peculiarities that unite people on different scales (food, handcraft, etc.).

A group composed of French academics, archaeologists, historians, art historians, geographers and linguists worked together on an essay about the identity of Auvergne.<sup>74</sup> They tried to define Auvergne and its inhabitants, the *Auvergnats* while answering the following questions: What is Auvergne? Do *Auvergnats* really exist as a category of their own? Have they ever existed? Is it possible to trace some continuity in the landscape and the inhabitants? Is there a common thread between these people that were known as Arverni 2300 years ago and the Auvergne region of today? There are no clear answers to these questions because landscape identity is complex and studying it requires a multi-disciplinary work. Indeed, there have been many variations in the morphology of Auvergne landscapes, even though this is a rural region. The latter also changed in the way it was considered over time. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Auvergne mountains were qualified as “steep drop-offs” whereas, one century later, people would admire the “harmonious majesty” of the mountains.<sup>75</sup> Even though the mountainous skyline seems to be at the very core of the landscape identity in Auvergne, the mountains were identified as volcanoes only belatedly. Historical elements could also play a part in the identification process. However, it is difficult to guarantee that the royal conquest, the former regime’s administrations, the French revolution, the ecclesiastical organisation or cultural practices gave consistency to this area and the human group that lived there.

It is interesting to note that volcanoes have always fascinated human beings. They represent nature’s fury and used to be a place to fear and avoid, and to be cherished at the same time. In Roman times, the son of Jupiter, Vulcan, was the god of fire and metalworking and embodied generosity but also chaos and destruction. He made the land more fertile but could also kill ruthlessly. Even though the latest volcanic activity in Auvergne occurred in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, volcanoes are still an essential part of the region. They make the region’s landscape unique and gave rise to several lakes which have changed human activity. Tourism is centred on the Auvergne volcanoes. While examining tourist literature, leaflets, guidebooks and ads, it

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Daniel Martin, *L'identité de l'Auvergne: mythe ou réalité historique* (Créer, 2002), 2-59.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

is striking that volcanoes always come to the fore. The department of Haute-Loire has produced a leaflet to promote the area. It is entitled *Volcanoes, our life-size playground*<sup>76</sup> and makes suggestions to discover Haute-Loire while carrying out activities directly linked to the volcanoes. The Guide du Routard also advises to go on “contemplative hikes” on the flanks of the volcanoes, as if the Auvergne spirit could only be grasped while contemplating at the volcanoes.<sup>77</sup> The RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes itself included the term “volcano” in its name although it is also host to many other features: forests, emblematic species, built heritage, cultural and rural heritage, natural habitat, bathing areas, etc. Therefore, this unusual and distinctive landscape feature is what seems to make local people proud and is turned into a marketable product.

## 2.2 Use of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes’ territory: a heritage enhancement

The RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes is a middle mountain rural territory whose goal is to protect the cultural and natural heritages of the Park’s area as well as its natural habitats while considering the challenges resulting from the development of tourism. The denomination *Parc Naturel Régional* is presented as a label established to serve the territory.<sup>78</sup> However, the territory is also serving the Park: the territory’s natural and cultural heritages are used to increase the Park’s visibility. Heritage is a major driver for tourist activities. There is an increasing number of heritage elements that are offered to tourists and visitors, particularly in rural tourist sites. The French word for heritage enhancement is *patrimonialisation*, which is meant to underline that heritage arises from a process, a construction. Indeed, the suffix -ation implies an action. The French geography professor Marie-Pierre Sol has studied heritage enhancement and defines it as “the designation of a given object as heritage; it involves both a selection (among other possibilities) and a qualification (that will determine the ways this object will be used, heritage-wise), in other words, a process which consists in creating heritage.”<sup>79</sup> Thus, she considers that heritage does not exist a priori but is socially constructed. However, Sol stresses that many researchers share this view but local tourism actors, who are working on

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<sup>76</sup> Original title: *Les volcans, notre terrain de jeu grandeur nature*

<sup>77</sup> *Le Routard Auvergne* (repr., [Paris]: Hachette, 2017), 13.

<sup>78</sup> PNRVA, “Des Valeurs - Parc Naturel Régional des Volcans d’Auvergne”, [Parcdesvolcans.fr](http://www.parcdesvolcans.fr), accessed 26 March 2019, <http://www.parcdesvolcans.fr/Des-valeurs>.

<sup>79</sup> “la désignation d’un objet quelconque comme patrimoine ; il s’agit à la fois d’une sélection (parmi d’autres possibles) et d’une qualification (dont dépendront les usages, « patrimoniaux », qui seront faits de cet objet), autrement dit d’un processus qui consiste à fabriquer du patrimoine.”, Marie-Pierre Sol, *La patrimonialisation comme (re)mise en tourisme. De quelques modalités dans les “Pyrénées Catalanes”* (Pierre Violier, 2004), 1-13.

heritage enhancement do not realize this process. They usually declare themselves to be working on the basis of a “heritage inventory” or promoting an already existing heritage.

In the current digital era, the way heritage is perceived and preserved has evolved. The French historian Pierre Nora has described these changes:

We have gone from a state and national heritage to a kind of social and community-based heritage in which a group identity can be deciphered; and, thus, from an inherited heritage to a claimed heritage. Being originally material and visible, the heritage has become invisible and symbolic [...] The heritage has left its historical era to enter its memory era: ours.<sup>80</sup>

Indeed, on the one hand, the creation of the World Wide Web keeps people away from the realities on the ground and gathers them around a digital sphere. On the other hand, the internet gives more visibility to protected territories and their heritage. The UNESCO Natural Heritage website is easily searchable by anyone. Several countries have also dedicated websites to their national natural heritage, such as Scotland<sup>81</sup>. This heritage digitalisation is complementary to the heritage enhancement and it changes the relationships between individuals and territories. Landscapes are not considered as a local privilege anymore, they are shared and promoted worldwide, opening local spaces to tourists and visitors, but also providing a major advantage: the luxury of choice. Indeed, billions of photographs are available on the internet, tourists can therefore get a visual overview of tourist spots, and choose where to go according to their tastes, the comments of other internet users, and the visibility of specific websites.

In order to understand the relationship between *patrimonialisation* processes and tourism in mountainous areas in France, it is necessary to focus on the foundation documents of upland public policy. Marie-Pierre Sol considers that references to the heritage could be found in official texts in the 1970s, which is the date from which she has focused her research.<sup>82</sup> Most occurrences refer to a kind of biological and sometimes, inherited good. This reveals that the *héritage* was still considered at the time as a kind of private good inherited within a family.

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<sup>80</sup>“On est passé d’un patrimoine étatique et national à un patrimoine de type social et communautaire où se déchiffre une identité de groupe ; et, donc, d’un patrimoine hérité à un patrimoine revendiqué. De matériel et visible, le patrimoine est devenu invisible et symbolique [...] le patrimoine a quitté son âge historique pour entrer dans son âge mémoriel : le nôtre.” Pierre Nora in Francesca Musiani and Valérie Schafer, "Patrimoine et patrimonialisation numériques", *RESET*, no. 6 (2016), doi:10.4000/reset.803.

<sup>81</sup> "Scottish Natural Heritage", *Nature.Scot*, accessed March 26 2019, <https://www.nature.scot/>.

<sup>82</sup> Marie-Pierre Sol, *La patrimonialisation comme (re)mise en tourisme. De quelques modalités dans les "Pyrénées Catalanes"* (Pierre Violier, 2004), 1-13.

Surprisingly, “heritage”, in a sense that is related to nature, could already be found in official texts as early as in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At the time, the first items that were considered as natural heritage were paintings, monuments and fine art in general that were supposed to be restored and displayed. Indeed, the French translation of heritage is *patrimoine*, which comes from the latin word *patrimonium*: In ancient Rome, every item that could be owned privately was named “heritage”. Therefore, it did not concern common, universal, or public goods.<sup>83</sup> Therefore, if we consider the modern sense of “heritage”, those who used to be owners become part of the national, local or global community that can enjoy and contribute to protecting the natural heritage.

In order to understand how the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes’ natural heritage is presented, several media can be analysed: tourist offices’ websites, tourist guidebooks, advertising leaflets on the region, and also topographical hiking books. Textual content is interesting to look at because it shows concretely what kind of message is conveyed about the Park. However, it is also important not to neglect iconography. Analysing images and photographs allows a better understanding of identity heritage and representations of the Park’s territory. In her article entitled *Between mountain naturalization and identity patrimonialization: ambivalence of the representations of the Cantal in topographical hiking guides*<sup>84</sup>, Mauricette Fournier analyses the way Cantal’s landscape is presented in hiking guidebooks: how the presentation contributes to nourishing people’s imagination and to producing their own fiction about this territory. Fournier stresses that topographical hiking guides contain both cultural and natural heritage visuals (such as photographs, drawings and maps). However, it seems clear that most of these visuals are related to natural heritage. Indeed, all the images related to cultural heritage are rather small and more rare than photographs of volcanoes, hills, fields and landscape in general. On the contrary, natural heritage visuals are much bigger (full or even double-page spread). Indeed, the latter have a seductive role in regard to the hiker, whereas the visuals related to cultural heritage have a documentary function. The choice of a specific visual presentation of Cantal nature has evolved over decades. Until the 1990s, photographers, publishers and policy-makers involved in the creation of topographical hiking books used to opt for photographs showing desert-like spaces of Cantal. From 1995, other choices are made: photographs show a bluer sky and a greener grass. The territory is

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Mauricette Fournier, "Entre naturalisation de la montagne et patrimonialisation identitaire : l’ambivalence des représentations du Cantal dans les topoguides de randonnée", *Belgeo*, no. 3 (2012), doi:10.4000/belgeo.7178.

presented as less wild, rugged and gloomy. Mountain land is not only presented as beautiful, but as an attractive playground for tourists.<sup>85</sup> Thus, topographical hiking books contribute to enhancing natural heritage through the images they contain but also aim at increasing economic activities. Indeed, most of these books target city dwellers who are looking for attractive green landscapes, and the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' area, to which Cantal belongs, is the ideal hiking place thanks to its mountain scenery, scarce population and protected territory.

In the same way as Fournier analyses visuals in topographical hiking guides, several communication and advertising media about the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes can be studied. On the home page of Auvergne VolcanSancy Tourist Office<sup>86</sup>, landscape photographs stand out. A selection of photographs was made to represent the variety of environments: waterfalls, lakes, wide grass plains with horse riders, volcanoes, wood cabins surrounded by firs, etc. Most importantly, the photographs seem to have been selected in order to show how the Park's territory changes depending on the season. The home page contains a combination of winter, summer and spring landscapes. Therefore, visitors wanting to get more information about the Park and its region will be facing visuals that fit the image the region wants to project about its territory: wild winters with heavy snow and frozen lakes, warm summers with blue skies and magnificent sunsets, and flowering springs when nature returns to life. In this way, tourists can imagine the Park's territory as a place with unspoiled and wild nature subject to the effects of seasonal cycles that cannot be observed everywhere. According to Auvergne VolcanSancy Tourist Office's Director, Judith Dumons (personal interview, March 28, 2019), nature in its purest form also attracts tourists who feel safer in the countryside, especially since the 2015 terrorist attacks in France:

The number of visitors has grown exponentially in the last few years. Because of the terrorist attacks, people wanted to be in a quiet place that would not be too crowded in order to feel safe. This is what our territory evokes: a rural and peaceful location. And I think that this plays a major role. We have observed a change in behaviour among tourists as well as an increasing number of visitors lately.<sup>87</sup>

The landscape diversity that is displayed also gives the image of a vast territory that offers many outstanding natural sites whose beauty cannot be discovered in only one day. Consequently, tourists might think that it is worth visiting the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes for several days.

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> "Homepage - Office de Tourisme Auvergne Volcansancy", Office de Tourisme Auvergne Volcansancy, <https://www.auvergnevolcansancy.com/en/> (accessed April 9, 2019).

<sup>87</sup> Judith Dumons, interviewed by Pauline Chaussende, March 28, 2019.

This selection of photographs also gives a major advantage: it suggests to prospective visitors that there is a broad range of activities that can be enjoyed in the Park. Indeed, waterfalls and lakes evoke swimming and recreational activities related to water (kayaking, fishing, etc), whereas other photographs suggest horse riding, skiing, snowshoe hiking, etc. On the tourist office website's home page, there is a tab entitled "Discover" which contains several sub-tabs allowing viewers to get an overview of villages, panoramas, waterfalls, lakes and beaches, etc. The "Discover" tab also contains two sub-tabs entitled "architectural heritage" and "natural heritage" which display some photographs that are also part of the sub-tabs "villages", "panoramas", "waterfalls", "lakes and beaches" sub-tabs. Labelling sites as "heritage" is a marketable choice that can attract more tourists by emphasizing on the specificity of the territory. Therefore, it seems that there is a strategic wish to enhance the Park's heritage by categorizing landscapes and architectural sites on the website. However, according to Judith Dumons this was not planned strategically:

This categorization is due to our referencing system and database. Most of the information that you can see on our website originates from *Apidae* [...] This is our departmental tourism database. Each tourist office on our territory maintains and supplies the database. This was not our own decision to split these sites into categories, it was done automatically.<sup>88</sup>

The RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' website has devoted a whole webpage to the Park's heritages.<sup>89</sup> The Park's heritage identity is described as follow: "A strong heritage identity: exceptional volcanoes and landscapes, remarkable fauna and flora, preserved local know-how and culture..."<sup>90</sup> There is a clear wish to enhance the Park's heritage(s) while emphasizing on local characteristics. Showing that the Park has its own identity is a way to attract more people and justify why it must be preserved. The webpage contains eight tabs that categorize each kind of heritage: "Magic of volcanoes", "remarkable landscapes", "water in all its phases", "natural habitats", "emblematic species", "forest, a resource", "cultural and rural heritage", "built heritage". Each tab is composed of a catchphrase about the heritage and sometimes also includes a more detailed description of each kind of heritage. The vocabulary used to describe the heritage always stresses its exceptional nature and specificity: "volcanism, distinctive sign!", "unique landscape features", "exceptional state of preservation", etc. Several

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> PNRVA, "Des Patrimoines - Parc Naturel Régional des Volcans D'auvergne", [Parcdesvolcans.fr, http://www.parcdesvolcans.fr/Des-patrimoines](http://www.parcdesvolcans.fr/Des-patrimoines) (accessed April 11, 2019).

<sup>90</sup> "Une identité patrimoniale forte : volcanes et paysages d'exception, faune et flore remarquables, savoir-faire et culture locale préservés..." PNRVA, "Magie des Volcans - Parc Naturel Régional des Volcans d'Auvergne", [Parcdesvolcans.fr, http://www.parcdesvolcans.fr/Des-patrimoines](http://www.parcdesvolcans.fr/Des-patrimoines) (accessed April 11, 2019).

photographs illustrate the text description, but unlike Auvergne VolcanSancy Tourist Office's website, they do not seem to play a major role. The textual content is more important than the visual content. It aims at documenting the Park's history while providing specific information on its territory:

The human being has witnessed the formation of the most recent Auvergne volcanoes and has been able to adapt to this remarkable but sometimes rugged territory. He/she has therefore developed know-how that has shaped the landscapes and defines the unifying elements of a rich and lively culture... Local know-how derives from a long and rich history; it is part of the park's identity and acts as a beautiful business card...<sup>91</sup>

On this webpage about the Park's heritage, the relationship between humans and the territory is recalled on several occasions. According to the Sustainable Economy sector Manager of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes Eve Alcaide (personal interview, April 4, 2019), the Park's *Syndicat Mixte* is entirely dedicated to sustainable tourism: "the primary purpose of the Syndicat Mixte is to communicate solely on sustainable tourism offers and to encourage other tourism actors to pursue a sustainable tourism strategy on classified sites."<sup>92</sup> Since the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' website mainly deals with this kind of concerns, reminding how the territory is influenced by human actions can be interpreted as a way of raising awareness about environmental issues while emphasizing local culture and traditions in the Park's area.

As emphasized, volcanoes are an essential part of the Park's heritage and a departmental brand has been created to "enhance a tourist and educational product, composed of a network of sites showing different kinds of volcanic heritage and a network of actors encouraging this patrimonial wealth".<sup>93</sup> Therefore, most communication and advertising media about the Park show that local government and tourism actors are combining efforts to enhance the Park's heritage and attract more tourists while promoting the local territory.

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<sup>91</sup> "Témoin de la formation des volcans d'Auvergne les plus récents, l'homme a su s'adapter à ce territoire remarquable mais parfois rude. Il a ainsi développé des savoir-faire qui ont façonné les paysages et le socle d'une culture riche et vivante... D'une longue et riche histoire, les savoir-faire locaux participent à l'identité du Parc et constituent une belle carte de visite..." PNRVA, "Héritage culturel et rural- Parc Naturel Régional des Volcans d'Auvergne", [parcdesvolcans.fr](http://www.parcdesvolcans.fr), <http://www.parcdesvolcans.fr/Des-patrimoines> (accessed April 11, 2019).

<sup>92</sup> Eve Alcaide, interviewed by Pauline Chaussende, April 4, 2019.

<sup>93</sup> "mettre en valeur un produit touristique et pédagogique, constitué d'un réseau de sites montrant différentes formes de patrimoine volcanique, et d'un réseau d'acteurs animant cette richesse patrimoniale" Département de la Haute-Loire, Centre Permanent d'Initiatives pour l'Environnement du Velay and Maison du Tourisme de la Haute-Loire, *Les volcans, notre terrain de jeu grandeur nature* (accessed April 11, 2019).

### 2.3 Territory and *terroir*, the enhancement of local products and know-how

The identification of people with a given territory is strengthened by local products and know-how that are part of this people's daily life and are not common outside their homeland. Therefore, in order to understand the relationship between people and their territory, it is necessary to see how their land becomes a resource that is used to produce local goods and know-how that can be considered as part of their traditions. Examining the notion of *terroir* in the case of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes is a way to understand how local expertise and goods are enhanced.

The word *terroir* has no direct translation in English. It comes from the Latin term *territorium* which stems from *terra* ("land"). Both words *terroir* and *territoire* ("territory" in English) have the same roots. Thus, in addition to being geographically related, both terms have an etymological relation. The concept of *terroir* has been explored from a geographic perspective but also from a pluri-disciplinary approach: psychogeography. According to Thomas Parker from Vassar College, New York who specializes in early modern literature, philosophy, and cultural studies, *terroir* is a "unique concept and word [that has] served for hundreds of years in France to describe how flavour and personality in a product are determined according to its specific region or origin".<sup>94</sup> However, several definitions can be applied to this term. The Dictionary of Geography gathers some of them: "[*Terroir* is] an area or terrain, usually rather small, whose soil and microclimate impart distinctive qualities to food products, and which is tied in with the marketing and cultural branding of food through its association with place".<sup>95</sup> According to the researchers specialising on alternative food networks Ilbery and Kneafsy, *terroir* "represents a more embedded set of relations between producers and consumers".<sup>96</sup> Finally, Gade "uses the French term *patrimonialisation* to describe 'this mesh of authenticity, heritage and food as manifested in regional cuisine, [and] the protection of rural landscapes'.<sup>97</sup> Thus, the word *terroir* implies a relation between food, territory, landscape, heritage and regional identity.

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<sup>94</sup> Thomas Parker, *Tasting French Terroir: The History of an Idea* (California Studies in Food and Culture) (University of California Press, 2015), 2.

<sup>95</sup> Elizabeth Barham in Susan Mayhew, "Terroir", *A Dictionary of Geography*, 2015, <http://www.oxfordreference.com.ezproxy.its.uu.se/view/10.1093/acref/9780199680856.001.0001/acref-9780199680856-e-3667> (accessed April 12, 2019).

<sup>96</sup> Ilbery and Kneafsy in Susan Mayhew, "Terroir", *A Dictionary of Geography*

<sup>97</sup> Gade in Susan Mayhew, "Terroir", *A Dictionary of Geography*

The RNP of Auvergne volcanoes' website contains a whole section dedicated to agriculture and local products. This section seems to be mainly directed to locals. Indeed, it contains tips and advice about consuming local products. It also addresses local farmers encouraging them to diversify into other areas (farm hosting, aromatic plants, small fruits and berries, etc.). Thus, the promotion of *terroir* products is not only aimed at the general public, but also involves local people to make the whole production and consumption processes more sustainable. However, a new kind of tourism that is linked to *terroir* products has emerged: culinary tourism, also called food tourism. Culinary tourists want to understand another culture through food. According to the social scientist Claude Fischler, "the culinary tourist seeks less to 'eat well' than to 'eat authentically', with the intention of immersing himself or herself in the culture of a place."<sup>98</sup> Auvergne VolcanSancy Tourist Office even mentions a "culinary heritage" that includes farm products, and typical Auvergnat dishes (*truffade*, *potée*, etc.).<sup>99</sup> The tourist office establishes a direct link between the territory and local products: "At the restaurant or with their family, people enjoy the cheese of kings: the Saint-Nectaire. Yum, the taste of hazelnuts which comes directly from surrounding meadows...".<sup>100</sup> This figure of speech suggests that while eating Saint-Nectaire, all the senses are awakened: people can get the taste of hazelnuts and they can almost picture the place where the cheese's local ingredients originate from. Promoting local products in this way is very likely to attract tourists by making them feel like tasting local food is a journey in itself: it allows them to feel in contact with the land. Therefore, culinary tourism is a way to enhance local cultural capital. This kind of tourism is directly related to sustainable tourism. Indeed, culinary tourists that are seeking authenticity throughout their trips are consuming local products. In this way, they contribute to the diversification and diversity of local fruits and vegetables' varieties. Culinary tourists can even encourage the reintroduction of ancient varieties that have been abandoned because of mass production implying the production of specimens with high returns. Culinary tourism also brings long-term benefits to local economy. Indeed, it has the advantage of extending the tourist season: tourists are more likely to come at any time of the year to enjoy fresh local fruits and

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<sup>98</sup> Claude Fischler in François Lenglet and Jean-Luc Giannelloni, "Does a Terroir Product Tell the Same Story to Tourists, Day-Trippers and Local Consumers? The Moderating Role of Variety-Seeking Tendency and Perceived Authenticity", *International Journal of Tourism Research* 18, no. 5 (2015): 494-505, doi:10.1002/jtr.2067.

<sup>99</sup> "Restaurants - Office De Tourisme Auvergne Volcansancy", Office De Tourisme Auvergne Volcansancy, 2019, <https://www.auvergnevolcansancy.com/restaurant/> (accessed April 13, 2019)

<sup>100</sup> "au restaurant comme en famille, on déguste le fromage des rois : Le Saint-Nectaire. Hum, le petit goût de noisette qui vient directement des prairies alentours..." "Gastronomie en Auvergne, Produits Régionaux d'Auvergne, Plats Traditionnels Auvergnats", Office de Tourisme du Sancy, <https://www.sancy.com/explore/gastronomie/> (accessed April 13, 2019)

vegetables, such as mushrooms.<sup>101</sup> Therefore, culinary tourism has a highly positive financial impact: it allows more frequent and stable incomes, which is why the promotion of local products is essential in rural territories such as Auvergne.

Food tourism is extremely valuable to culinary tourists because it offers them memorable tourism experiences. Such experiences benefit tourism providers because tourists that have enjoyed a memorable tourism experience can share it with others and contribute to increasing the tourism providers' visibility. According to scholarly studies, food experiences are more likely than many other types of experiences to be remembered because eating and drinking involves all five senses.<sup>102</sup> Culinary tourists will remember *terroir* products and local food from a tourism destination they are visiting, especially because local meals are different from what they are used to on a daily basis in their homeland: "ordinary meals... are non-events".<sup>103</sup> Novelty is important in all kinds of life experiences because trying something for the first time leaves indelible memories and is experienced as an event. Memorable food tourism experiences are important because when they are successful, tourists will select prospective trips based on their past experiences. Therefore, an individual that came to the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' Park and enjoyed *terroir* food during his stay, is very likely to consume local food in his future tourism destinations. In this way, he or she will play his/her part in sustainable tourism by encouraging small-scale production and consumption of local products. Since the notion of *terroir* food evokes artisanal and handmade activities, culinary tourists are also more eager to taste seasonal fruits and vegetables, but also food that was produced with respect for the land using traditional methods. They look for environmentally friendly meals that can be considered as local from growth to creation and consumption. Thus, food itself is not the only requirement for memorable culinary tourism experiences. Local and traditional know-how is also one of the criteria that tourists seeking authenticity are looking for.

The RNP of Auvergne volcanoes promotes its local know-how and products on its website. Since Auvergne is a rural area, agriculture is the largest sector in the Park. The "rural sustainable development Department" of the Park is in charge of enhancing local productions

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<sup>101</sup> Marielle Salvador-Perignon, "Tourisme culinaire et valorisation des produits artisanaux : vers un tourisme durable", *Management & Avenir* 56, no. 6 (2012): 114, doi:10.3917/mav.056.0114.

<sup>102</sup> Matthew J. Stone et al., "Elements of Memorable Food, Drink, and Culinary Tourism Experiences", *Journal of Travel Research* 57, no. 8 (2017): 1121-1132, doi:10.1177/0047287517729758.

<sup>103</sup> David E. Sutton in Matthew J. Stone et al., "Elements of Memorable Food, Drink, and Culinary Tourism Experiences", *Journal of Travel Research* 57, no. 8 (2017): 1121-1132, doi:10.1177/0047287517729758.

and specifies that the Park's specialisation in livestock and cheese production allows biodiversity preservation of landscape and territory.<sup>104</sup> In 2016, the French Federation of Regional Nature Parks has launched the brand *Valeurs Parc Naturel Régional* (Regional Nature Park Values).<sup>105</sup> In the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes, this brand applies to hosts (hoteliers, cottage and bed and breakfast owners, etc.), restorers, craftsmen, bakers, farmers, etc. It is based on three key values: the link with the local territory (local production and raw materials, collaboration with other local actors), the human dimension (the products are linked to the territory's heritages and man-made, there is a shared personalised and educational reception on site), and an enhanced and preserved environment (recycling, customer awareness, sound water and electricity management). The brand is attributed to a third party by the Park's *Syndicat Mixte* under a contract specifying the commitments of both the beneficiary and the *Syndicat Mixte*. The contractual process includes a progress plan containing the commitments of the beneficiary during the five-year contract and the payment of a financial contribution to get the right to use the brand.<sup>106</sup> Among the branded products and know-how are local meat, cheese, and honey, herbal products, traditional pastries, and volcanic stones. The relation between *terroir* and territory is recalled in the branding description:

While strengthening the territory's identity, the brand *Valeurs Parc* contributes to maintaining and developing traditional crafts while preserving and enhancing local resources on this exceptional territory. Women and men have banded together to embody the brand's values. Through this commitment, they share their attachment to the Auvergne volcanoes, this place where they have chosen to live and work. They are true ambassadors.<sup>107</sup>

Mentioning the relation between local people and volcanoes shows how important the territory is in the process of maintaining and developing *terroir* products and traditional know-how. This description also aims to stress local identity: locals have a bond with their land which creates

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<sup>104</sup> PNRVA, "Agriculture Et Produits - Des Enjeux, Des Actions - Agir - Parc Naturel Régional des Volcans d'Auvergne", <http://www.parcdesvolcans.fr/Agir/Des-enjeux-des-actions/Agriculture-et-produits> (accessed April 12, 2019).

<sup>105</sup> Parcs Naturels Régionaux de France, "Valeurs Parc Naturel Régional, la nouvelle marque des Parcs Naturels Régionaux de France", 2016, [https://www.parcs-naturels-regionaux.fr/sites/federationpnr/files/document/centre\\_de\\_ressources/pnr\\_dossier\\_presse\\_a4\\_pages\\_interieures\\_160527\\_hd.compressed.pdf](https://www.parcs-naturels-regionaux.fr/sites/federationpnr/files/document/centre_de_ressources/pnr_dossier_presse_a4_pages_interieures_160527_hd.compressed.pdf) (accessed April 12, 2019).

<sup>106</sup> PNRVA, "Les Valeurs de la marque - Osez la marque Valeurs Parc ! - Des Valeurs - Parc Naturel Régional des Volcans d'Auvergne", <http://www.parcdesvolcans.fr/Des-valeurs/Osez-la-marque-Valeurs-Parc/Les-valeurs-de-la-marque>, (accessed April 12, 2019).

<sup>107</sup> "Tout en renforçant l'identité du territoire, la marque Valeurs Parc contribue à maintenir et développer les filières artisanales, ainsi que préserver et valoriser les ressources locales de ce territoire d'exception. Des femmes et des hommes se sont regroupés pour porter les valeurs de la marque. A travers cet engagement, ils partagent leur attachement aux Volcans d'Auvergne, cet « ici » où ils ont choisi de vivre et travailler. De vrais ambassadeurs." PNRVA, "Les Valeurs de la marque - Osez la marque Valeurs Parc ! - Des Valeurs - Parc Naturel Régional des Volcans d'Auvergne", <http://www.parcdesvolcans.fr/Des-valeurs/Osez-la-marque-Valeurs-Parc/Les-valeurs-de-la-marque>, (accessed April 12, 2019).

a sense of belonging to the Park's territory. This is an important part of the *terroir* production process: local food and know-how are not considered authentic only because they were produced on-site, there is also a *terroir* state of mind. Indeed, locals that care about their territory and its enhancement are conveying "local colour" to tourists through their products. Auvergne identity can be experienced through local food and know-how but also through the way local producers transmit their attachment to their homeland.

The relation between locals and their territory is the core aspect of *terroir* food: consuming and producing local products is a way to honour their land and its resources. Local resources combined with traditional know-how play their part in the creation of *terroir* products and branding strategies are used to enhance them. They allow tourists to live memorable culinary tourism experiences while supporting sustainable tourism. Local know-how and food are an important part of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' promotional strategy which targets both local people and visitors and makes the wheel of the region go round.

#### **2.4 The Park's charter and the *Syndicat Mixte*'s activity report: territory at the heart of the matter**

The RNP of Auvergne volcanoes' territory is a crucial resource for the Park and the charter, as well as the activity report of the *Syndicat Mixte* revolve around it. In order to understand how the territory is used, enhanced and preserved, both the activity report and the charter will be examined from a content and discourse-based perspective. Indeed, both documents define all the activities and actions related to the Park which involve, among others, public policy, territorial cohesion, and economic development. This section is based on the 2017 activity report of the *Syndicat Mixte*. This document describes the activities that were carried out in 2017 in order to contribute to the fulfilment of the charter.

The *Syndicat Mixte* was created to lead the RNP of Auvergne volcanoes' territory and to implement the charter and ensuring its enforcement. In this regard, it has an advisory role regarding country planning documents, road projects, classified installations, etc. The region, the *départements* and townships on the Park's territory, as well as establishments for cooperation between local authorities with their own tax status are committed to the charter.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Syndicat Mixte du Parc Naturel Régional des Volcans d'Auvergne, "Rapport d'activités du Syndicat Mixte du Parc 2017 en application de la charte du Parc Naturel Régional des Volcans d'Auvergne adoptée en 2013", 2018.

The *Syndicat Mixte* launches actions dealing with outstanding nature sites management while promoting sustainable development through projects involving the environment and various heritages. It is also in charge of coordinating and pooling different actors regarding common projects and issues. Therefore, it provides support to project developers. The Syndicat also raises awareness about local issues and encourages local people to be involved in the future of their territory. Finally, the Syndicat manages the brand *Valeurs Parc* to validate products, services and know-how enhancing the territory's heritages. It does not have the legal competences that townships have but the latter can delegate responsibilities to the Syndicat. However, the Syndicat cannot take decisions to allow or forbid any activities or projects since only townships and the Prefect have a policing power.<sup>109</sup>

The activity report lists the main actions that were carried out in accordance with the 2013-2025 charter. Most of the actions are directly linked to the Park's territory. The report is organised in four different sections which all refer to the charter's guidelines:

- Territorial and social cohesion inspired by the heritage character of the RNP of Auvergne volcanoes,
- An exceptional living environment supported by innovative public policies,
- An economy driven by flagship activities promoting the use of the territory's resources,
- Animation, follow-up and evaluation of the territory's project.<sup>110</sup>

Each of these sections will be analysed to reveal how the Park's territory is managed and is considered both as a tool and as a resource.

Several animations were carried out between April and December 2017 as part of the first purpose of the charter: *Territorial and social cohesion inspired by the heritage character of the RNP of Auvergne volcanoes*. All the animations were mainly targeting local people, but also visitors. The main goal was to increase a sense of belonging to the Park's territory among locals while increasing the Park's reputation among a wider public. Therefore, all the animations were based on the Park's territory and the section's title itself stresses the importance of the territory. The *Syndicat Mixte* organised, among others, nature walks, calls for application, branding and enhancement of local events launched by townships, and associations in the Park's area, sporting events, coordination of a producers and craftsmen's market, etc. Several communication tools were used in order to promote the Park's territory and the

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

animations carried out: 22 posters, 2 leaflets, 6 flyers, 26 newsletters, 72 Facebook posts, 5 press conferences, etc. Even though this section is supposedly aiming at fostering territorial and social cohesion, it seems that the animations and actions carried out were more promotion-oriented and were created in order to increase the Park's reputation more than including local people. However, the Park's territory is still the key to this approach. Indeed, the *Syndicat Mixte* has launched a cultural programme whose aim is to enhance the Park's heritages, especially the natural heritage, such as an exhibition on the Park's nature sites that are not the most commonly visited.

The second section of the activity report, *an exceptional living environment supported by innovative public policies* concerns mainly all the actions carried out to manage, monitor, support and raise awareness about the need for a respectful use of the territory. In 2017, for instance, the *Syndicat Mixte* alerted the State regarding violations of classified sites. It also prepared a biodiversity monitoring program to list the various species found on the Park's territory. One of the main projects that was initiated in 2017 was an eco-pastoral territory project whose goal was to support local agricultural activity while preserving biodiversity and volcanic structures: a flock of sheep would graze meadows and pastures that are difficult to access and could be damaged by human maintenance. As part of this section, the *Syndicat* also published the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the guidebook *Volcanologie de la Chaîne des Puys*<sup>111</sup> which offers a better understanding of volcanic structures and involves cooperation with scientists. Among the activities that were carried out were also the restauration and maintenance of natural pathways, the animation of agro-environmental and climate projects, and guidance on several projects (as part of Natura 2000 for instance). While examining the second section of the activity report, it seems clear that all the actions in this section were directly linked to the territory and the protection of the land and the species it is home to. All the projects and animations implemented did not target visitors, no communication actions were carried out in order to advertise the Park's territory; most of them were aiming at protecting it.

The last two sections of the activity report can be examined together. The third section, *An economy driven by flagship activities promoting the use of the territory's resources*, concerns all the actions that were carried out to boost local economy. The actions comprise the economic enhancement and promotion of local breeds of sheep and cows, the enhancement of

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<sup>111</sup> Alain de Goër de Herve and Guy Camus, *Volcanologie de la Chaîne des Puys*, 6th ed. (Aydat: Parc Naturel Régional des Volcans d'Auvergne, 2017).

local craftsmen and producers through a market, sustainable tourism training of touristic sites on the Park's territory, the promotion of hiking opportunities, local products and know-how in the Park's shops, etc. Finally, the fourth section, *Animation, follow-up and evaluation of the territory's project*, is a review of progress achieved, budget, partnerships and functioning of the *Syndicat Mixte* in general. Therefore, the last sections complement the first ones, which were based on the actions carried out, whereas these two focus on the results and goals achieved and the overall organisation of the *Syndicat Mixte*. Throughout the whole report, all the activities are based on the Park's territory, which seems to be considered as a tool to gain more visibility, and as a fragile resource that can be used but needs to be protected.

The *Syndicat Mixte's* activity report is directly related to the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' charter. The 2013-2025 charter aims at improving and enhancing the relation between local people and their territory. It is a file composed of a report and a map of the Park. Its main purpose is to achieve, in 2025, a shared and reinforced quality of life. In order to fulfil this mission, the charter is based on a balance between preservation and enhancement of local assets. The Park's charter is a kind of moral contract committing the State and local officials who adopt it to respect and apply measures supporting the territory's heritages.<sup>112</sup>

Sustainable development researchers from Blaise Pascal University, Auvergne, Arnaud Diemer and Christel Marquat conducted an in-depth study of two RNPs: the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes and the RNP Livradois Forez.<sup>113</sup> They compared both Parks' charters and analysed them using the software TROPES. This software allows a semantic and statistical analysis of sustainable development's representations within the Parks' charters. The analysis revealed that the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' charter is based on a descriptive discourse. An analysis of the most recurring verbs, adjectives and references in both charters has shown that the terms used in the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' charter suggest that the Park is active: it proposes, adapts, allows, contributes to, develops, leads, does, etc., whereas the RNP Livradois Forez's charter is based on an argumentative discourse. The study also shows that the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' charter contains extensive descriptions of the Park's territory. Indeed, the following

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<sup>112</sup> "Un projet pour le territoire", [parcdesvolcans.wixsite.com](https://parcdesvolcans.wixsite.com),

<https://parcdesvolcans.wixsite.com/parcdesvolcans40ans/un-projet-pour-le-territoire> (accessed April 18, 2019).

<sup>113</sup> Arnaud Diemer and Christel Marquat, "De la gouvernance territoriale à la valorisation des patrimoines culturels, comment rendre opérationnel le développement durable au sein des Parcs Naturels Régionaux (PNR) ?", *Colloque Francophone International « Cultures, territoires et développement durable » 14-15 Avril 2014, Chamalières.*, 2014, 1-6.

terms are among the most commonly used throughout the whole document: “landscape”, “space”, “site”, “water”, “mountains”, “lake”, “outstanding”, “wide”. Thus, the charter’s guidelines are centred on the Park’s territory and use a description of the Park’s area as a basis for each objective to achieve.

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The territory is identified through its landscape which is essential for local people because it is a part of their culture and daily life and can be inherent to their professional activity. The Park’s territory is used to attract more tourists and increase the Park’s visibility through heritage enhancement. It is also an important resource because it is commonly associated with local know-how and products and therefore becomes marketable. Official documents, such as the Park’s charter and the *Syndicat Mixte*’s activity report show that the territory is at the heart of the matter. The territory can be considered as a “common denominator” in regard to sustainable tourism. Indeed, it connects local people, visitors, local officials and other tourism actors in order to make a land socially, environmentally and economically sustainable.

### **Chapter 3. A European Framework for the Promotion of local Natural Heritages. The Case of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes**

In order to understand how sustainable tourism is promoted and implemented in the case of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes, it is necessary to understand the initiatives launched at the European level to preserve the environment. According to a European Commission survey, in 2008, 93% of Europeans considered that “preserving biodiversity [was] a moral obligation affecting current generations as stewards of nature.”<sup>114</sup> The survey also revealed that Europeans were more worried about nature preservation as an overall issue than specifically in their own countries.<sup>115</sup> Raising awareness of sustainable development and biodiversity loss seems to have strengthened the view that environment issues within Europe have to be addressed not only locally, or nationally, but at a European level. European intervention in regard to nature conservation is therefore crucial, which justifies the key role of Europe in the functioning and managing of RNPs. This chapter is about the initiatives undertaken at European level regarding environment preservation, such as the European Landscape Convention and the project “Europe’s Nature, Regional and Landscapes Parks”<sup>116</sup>. The initiatives concerning specifically RNPs will also be analysed: the European Summit of Regional Nature Parks and the implementation of Natura 2000 sites. Throughout this chapter, the relation between the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes and the European Union will be elaborated, in particular regarding the adherence to the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes and the Park’s budgetary and financial management. Policy-making shapes environment preservation practice but there may be a gap between policy and practice in some cases. It is important to point out whether actual practice is in line with official documents. Therefore, the implementation of official policy will be analysed throughout the next chapter, whereas the present chapter will mainly be about policy as such.

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<sup>114</sup> European Commission, "Environment: Ninety Percent of Europeans Believe Biodiversity Loss is a Problem", 2008, [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-08-62\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-08-62_en.htm) (accessed April 29, 2019).

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> "Europe’s Nature Parks, Landscape Parks and Regional Parks: A Project to Share Knowledge and Experience", european-parks.org, <https://www.european-parks.org/about-the-project/course-of-the-project> (accessed May 2, 2019).

### **3.1 The European Landscape Convention: a conservation instrument encouraging a multi-scalar implementation**

The European Landscape Convention (ELC) was signed in Florence in 2000. It complements both the UNESCO and Council of Europe's heritage conventions and introduces a "Europe-wide concept centring on the quality of landscape protection, management and planning"<sup>117</sup>. The specific nature of the ELC comes from the fact that it does not only covers outstanding landscapes: it covers the entire territory. The landscape has to be identified and assessed, before it can be protected. Professionals working together with local inhabitants identify landscapes through field research. Several structures and components need to be taken into account: economic, natural and social forces, social perceptions and types of territories. The ELC is part of a "Landscape policy" aiming at conserving, protecting and maintaining the heritage(s) of a landscape in particular. Indeed, landscape is not only a concept explored and studied by environment experts and geographers: it has become a policy area. In order to know what landscape protection means according to the Convention, it is necessary to understand what the term "landscape" covers in this context. According to the Council of Europe, landscape can be defined as a land evolving through time under the impact of natural forces and human intervention.<sup>118</sup> Landscape policy encourages the public to actively participate in landscape protection and conservation and implies that landscape cannot be considered by individual states alone: it has to be addressed through international programmes and policies.

Since one of the ELC's main goals is to increase public participation in landscape planning and management, it has adopted a participatory approach to put it into practice. However, this approach has not been entirely successful. The researchers Marie Stenseke from the Department of Human and Economic Geography at the University of Gothenburg, Göteborg, Sweden and Michael Jones from the Department of Geography at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, Norway have identified various challenges to participation: "Challenges identified in the case studies range from indifference or scepticism regarding public participation in government quarters to problems of implementing ideas produced through participatory exercises"<sup>119</sup>. Stenseke and Jones also

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<sup>117</sup> "The European Landscape Convention", Council of Europe Portal, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/landscape/the-european-landscape-convention> (accessed April 29, 2019).

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Michael Jones, and Marie Stenseke, "The European Landscape Convention". *Landscape Series* 13 (2010): 295-309. [https://link-springer-com.ezproxy.its.uu.se/chapter/10.1007/978-90-481-9932-7\\_15](https://link-springer-com.ezproxy.its.uu.se/chapter/10.1007/978-90-481-9932-7_15)

identify tourism as a threat regarding the implementation of the ELC. Indeed, several European countries seem to be tempted by the creation of landscapes that could be attractive for tourists. Therefore, these countries, such as Greece, tend to promote homogeneous landscapes that can attract more tourists at the expense of nature preservation.<sup>120</sup> However, even though there are several challenges to the implementation of the ELC, more effective co-operation at regional and local levels is also encouraged within the ELC framework. A Council of Europe Landscape Award has been established by the ELC and can be awarded to a regional or local authority, or to a non-governmental organisation to salute their efforts to launch lastingly effective measures to protect, develop or manage a particular landscape. These measures can then be considered as examples to be followed by other European territorial authorities, fostering thus a multi-scalar implementation of the Convention. Scholars in political and economic geography, such as Erik Swyngedouw<sup>121</sup>, Julie Graham and Katherine Gibson<sup>122</sup>, Neil Brenner, Bob Jessop, Martin Jones and Gordon MacLeod<sup>123</sup> have long focused on the politics of scale. However, the role of the region in multi-scalar treaties has not been investigated extensively. According to the urban geographer Andrew Jonas, “scale is a lens through which to think about and act upon change”.<sup>124</sup> Scale is a concept of paramount importance in the context of the ELC because the preservation of landscape concerns several actors at different levels. Kara E. Dempsey, from the Department of Geography and Planning at Appalachian State University and Stephanie M. Wilbrand, from the Clinical Science Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison have studied the principle of subsidiarity for the implementation of the ELC through a case study of Catalonia, Spain.<sup>125</sup> Their study shows that the regional or local level is usually considered most suitable for implementing the Convention measures. The Catalonia case is an example of regional effectiveness:

While the national government has not established specific methodology to implement and apply the ELC in Spain, regional centres can provide a diverse mosaic of solutions and implementation policies that are specific to their region

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Erik Swyngedouw in Kevin R Cox, *Spaces of Globalization: Reasserting the Power of the Local* (New York: Guilford Press, 1997), 137-166.

<sup>122</sup> J. K. Gibson-Graham, Beyond global vs. local: Economic politics outside the binary frame. In Andrew Herod and Melissa W Wright, *Geographies of Power: Placing Scale* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2002), 25-60.

<sup>123</sup> Neil Brenner et al., *State Space in Question State/Space. A Reader*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003).

<sup>124</sup> Andrew E G Jonas, "Pro Scale: Further Reflections on the 'Scale Debate' in Human Geography", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 31, no. 3 (2006): 399-406, doi:10.1111/j.1475-5661.2006.00210.x (accessed April 30, 2019).

<sup>125</sup> Kara E. Dempsey and Stephanie M. Wilbrand, "The Role of the Region in the European Landscape Convention", *Regional Studies* 51, no. 6 (2017): 909-919, doi:10.1080/00343404.2016.1144923 (accessed April 30, 2019).

[...] and therefore could be considered the most effective scale at which to implement the ELC policies.<sup>126</sup>

The implementation of the ELC measures at local or regional level varies depending on the country's political and administrative system. Since Spain is composed of 17 autonomous communities (regions), the inclusion of the ELC's landscape guidelines in each region's territorial plan is decided independently of the national state. However, the success of these measures depends on national funding. Therefore, in the case of Catalonia and other Spanish autonomous communities, the realization of the ELC measures was hampered by austerity measures adopted in 2010.<sup>127</sup>

In France, cross-border cooperation is encouraged both at regional and local level to ensure the preparation of joint landscape programmes to implement ELC measures. The State transfers several responsibilities and powers to the French regions regarding the environment. The regions are in charge of land planning through the implementation of a regional planning and development scheme which falls under their exclusive competence. They also have other competences linked to landscape, territory and environment matters, such as heritage preservation, implementation of a Regional Plan for redevelopment and air quality and classification of regional nature reserves, and implementation of a regional waste prevention and management plan.<sup>128</sup> In 2009-2010, Regional Departments of Environment, Land Use and Housing (*Direction Régionale de l'Environnement, de l'Aménagement et du Logement – DREAL*)<sup>129</sup> were created to ensure a better sectoral policy integration. The Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes DREAL, gathering both Rhône-Alpes and Auvergne territories was created in 2016, following a territorial reform merging the 22 former regions to form 13 larger regions. The DREAL's main goals are a transversal approach to sustainable development, the preservation of environmental quality, and natural and industrial risk management. Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, like every other region, also has a Regional Landscape Resource Centre (*Centre de Ressource*

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Mark Weisbrot and Juan Antonio Montecino in Kara E. Dempsey and Stephanie M. Wilbrand, "The Role of the Region in the European Landscape Convention", *Regional Studies* 51, no. 6 (2017): 909-919, doi:10.1080/00343404.2016.1144923 (accessed April 30, 2019).

<sup>128</sup> "Quelles sont les compétences exercées par les régions ?", vie-publique.fr, 2018, <https://www.vie-publique.fr/decouverte-institutions/institutions/collectivites-territoriales/competences-collectivites-territoriales/quelles-sont-competences-exercees-par-regions.html> (accessed April 30, 2019).

<sup>129</sup> "Missions et organisation de la DREAL - DREAL Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes", auvergne-rhone-alpes.developpement-durable.gouv.fr, 2019, <http://www.auvergne-rhone-alpes.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/missions-et-organisation-de-la-dreal-r2986.html> (accessed April 30, 2019).

*Régional des Paysages*).<sup>130</sup> Its goals are to inform the public about the actions implemented on the territory and to foster interactions between various actors, such as the association of Regional Nature Parks, the French Landscape Federation, town-planning agencies, regional council, etc. Among the actions launched by the Regional Landscape Resource Centre is a landscape glossary which lists terms extracted from the European Landscape Convention, for instance. Another key actor in preserving Auvergne's territory is the Auvergne Conservatory of Natural Spaces (*Conservatoire des espaces naturels d'Auvergne*).<sup>131</sup> It is supposed to ensure appropriate management of nature sites on the basis of a coordinated approach taking into account social, economic and environmental concerns. Expanding citizen involvement is also a key objective of the Conservatory. It is supported by a network composed of around 300 members and volunteers, as well as a scientific committee, who carry out various projects to preserve Auvergne nature. There are six Conservatories of natural spaces within the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region which correspond to six different geographic areas (Auvergne, Allier, Haute-Savoie, Isère, Rhône-Alpes and Savoie Conservatories). In this way, various local initiatives have been launched in connection with the implementation of the ELC.

### **3.2 The project “Europe’s Nature, Regional and Landscapes Parks”: a European experience fostering regional exchange**

The Association of German Nature Parks (*Verband Deutscher Naturparke*, VDN) in cooperation with EUROPARC Federation, the umbrella organisation for European protected areas, launched the project “Europe’s Nature, Regional and Landscapes Parks”. The project ran from October 2014 until November 2017 with the support of the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation and the German government.<sup>132</sup> Its main objective was to increase communication among RNPs in Europe. Several working steps were implemented: first, a survey among RNP associations and responsible authorities to know more about the parks’ main objectives and fields of work, followed by study visits to several “parks, park associations, responsible ministries and park partners in 11 countries throughout Europe”<sup>133</sup>. The main goal

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<sup>130</sup> "Un centre de ressource régional sur le paysage, pourquoi ?", [paysages.auvergne-rhone-alpes.gouv.fr](http://www.paysages.auvergne-rhone-alpes.gouv.fr), 2019, <http://www.paysages.auvergne-rhone-alpes.gouv.fr/un-centre-de-ressource-regionale-sur-le-paysage-a1270.html> (accessed April 30, 2019).

<sup>131</sup> "Ensemble, Préservons Les Espaces Naturels D’Auvergne !", [cen-auvergne.fr](http://cen-auvergne.fr/), <http://cen-auvergne.fr/> (accessed April 30, 2019).

<sup>132</sup> "Europe’s Nature Parks, Landscape Parks and Regional Parks: A Project to Share Knowledge and Experience", [european-parks.org](http://european-parks.org), <https://www.european-parks.org/about-the-project/course-of-the-project> (accessed May 2, 2019).

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

was to communicate face-to-face with parks officials while collecting best practice examples. The final step of the project was the publication of a book where park associations from 22 European states collaborated to present their tasks and objectives. The most significant step of the project, however, was to present the outcome at the First European Summit of Regional Nature Parks held on June 21, 2017 in Brussels. The Summit was an opportunity for European RNPs to show their value and potential to politicians and decision-makers, especially in regard to nature conservation, environment-friendly tourism, sustainable regional development and environmental education.

### **3.3 The first European Summit of Regional Nature Parks**

Experts from the European Parliament, the European Commission, and the Committee of the Regions gathered for the first European Summit of Regional Nature Parks in Europe. The main goal was to determine “how Regional Nature Parks can be more effectively used to achieve the EU’s objectives”.<sup>134</sup> The RNPs are significant to nature preservation since they cover 8% of the surface of the EU-28. There are around 900 RNPs in the European Union plus Norway and Switzerland. A Declaration entitled “Regional Nature Parks – Working for Europe”<sup>135</sup> was signed by RNP representatives from 20 European states at the end of the event. It emphasized “the value of their parks for the building of a sustainable and social Europe, the development of rural areas and the implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives.”<sup>136</sup> The Declaration aims to strengthen the RNPs. Indeed, the main conclusion of the event was that RNPs are among the best positioned agencies to ensure a good implementation of European Nature Directives. These Directives include the Habitats Directive, the Birds Directive and the Water Framework Directive. In addition, RNPs contribute to helping the European Union in achieving its main political goals including the Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Biodiversity Strategy. During the Summit, Dr. Christiane Paulus, Deputy Director General for Nature Conservation of the German Environment Ministry commented on the project “Europe’s Nature, Regional and Landscapes Parks”. She explained that the main idea was to cooperate at the European level on

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<sup>134</sup> "First European Summit of Regional Nature Parks in Europe", EUROPARC Federation, <https://www.europarc.org/news/2017/06/first-european-summit-regional-nature-parks-europe/> (accessed May 2, 2019).

<sup>135</sup> Europe's Nature Regional Landscape Parks, "Regional Nature Parks – Working for Europe, European Regional Nature Parks Declaration", 2017.

<sup>136</sup> "The First European Summit of Regional Nature Parks", european-parks.org, <https://www.european-parks.org/project-news/european-summit-regional-nature-parks> (accessed May 2, 2019).

the parks' regional functions to foster transnational exchange. According to Dr. Paulus "It also supports the ideal of a united, common Europe, an important symbol in the current times."<sup>137</sup>

### 3.4 The implementation and animation of Natura 2000 sites

Natura 2000 is a European network for effective nature protection. It is defined as followed by Chris Park and Michael Allaby in the Dictionary of Environment and Conservation: "A network of areas within the European Community that is designed to conserve natural habitats and species of plants and animals which are rare, endangered, or vulnerable".<sup>138</sup> It is based on a common legislation that was created to protect natural heritage in Europe. Two Nature Directives were combined: The Birds Directive adopted in 1979 and the Habitats Directive from 1992. Natura 2000 sites are based only on scientific criteria and are designated by the individual countries. The network was created in a context of growing awareness of environmental issues. Indeed, in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, several international conferences took place, such as the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, followed by the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. Several international organisations were founded at the same time to address environmental problems, such as: Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust in 1946, the International Union for Conservation of Nature in 1948, World Wildlife Funds in 1961, and Friends of the Earth in 1969.<sup>139</sup> Several Nature Conventions were signed a few years later, such as the Ramsar Convention in 1971, whose aim was to create the first network of protected areas on an international scale, and the Berne Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats in 1979. After the adoption of the Birds and Habitats Directives, more than 26 000 sites were gradually added to the Natura 2000 network, which has become "the largest network of protected areas in the world".<sup>140</sup> In 2012, the share of each country's territory devoted to Natura 2000 sites varied from 7% in the United Kingdom to 36% in Slovenia.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> "First European Summit of Regional Nature Parks", naturparke.de, <https://www.naturparke.de/service/presse/pressemitteilungen/nachricht/detail/first-european-summit-of-regional-nature-parks.html> (accessed May 2, 2019).

<sup>138</sup> Chris Park and Michael Allaby, "Natura 2000", A Dictionary of Environment and Conservation (Oxford University Press, 2017), <http://www.oxfordreference.com.ezproxy.its.uu.se/view/10.1093/acref/9780191826320.001.0001/acref-9780191826320-e-5284> (accessed May 2, 2019).

<sup>139</sup> Douglas Evans, "Building the European Union's Natura 2000 Network", *Nature Conservation* 1 (2012): 11-26, doi:10.3897/natureconservation.1.1808 (accessed May 2, 2019).

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

The European Commission publishes a Natura 2000 newsletter twice a year that provides information on the implementation of the Nature Directives. The newsletter also gives information on the actions launched regarding the EU's biodiversity policy. For instance, the February 2019 issue contains information on the key drivers of success for Natura 2000. It also presents the current state of Marine Natura 2000 sites and introduces the LIFE EuroBirdPortal which "uses records from over 100,000 volunteer birdwatchers across Europe to create animated maps depicting the week by week distributional patterns of 105 bird species in near-real time".<sup>142</sup> The newsletter also contains information on the issues addressed during the UN Biodiversity Conference 2018 and dedicates several pages to "natura news" concerning the latest Natura 2000 publications, events and news.

The first step taken to establish the Natura 2000 network was to designate special protection areas. This process was rather slow regarding the Birds Directive, and several European Member States have been charged for non-implementation of the directive. Indeed, protected areas under the Birds Directive are designated by the Member States themselves and there are no agreed EU criteria for this, which makes the site designation slow and complicated. When the sites are designated, data about them are sent to the European Commission. The process was smoother and faster regarding the Habitats Directive since it has site selection criteria. The Member States choose relevant sites which then have to be approved by the European Commission. However, the Co-Director of the Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy, Jouni Paavola, revealed that there were legal proceedings because most of the EU15 did not manage to propose sites in time.<sup>143</sup> The Natura 2000 network establishment has been subject to several difficulties within each EU Member State, and the list of designated or proposed sites has been criticized. It is necessary to understand that the Natura 2000 network is not only about site designation, but mostly about effective implementation and management on-site. In order to implement the network, funding is essential. EU Member States are responsible for financing and implementing environmental policies. However, if they face very high costs, the EU can provide funding. Public funding is one of the main sources of financing regarding Natura 2000 and is based on the EU co-funding instruments.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> "LIFE Eurobirdportal", *Nature and Biodiversity Newsletter Natura 2000*, February 2019,

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/info/pubs/docs/nat2000news/nat45\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/info/pubs/docs/nat2000news/nat45_en.pdf) (accessed May 3, 2019).

<sup>143</sup> Jouni Paavola, Protected areas governance and justice: Theory and the European Union's Habitats Directive. *Environmental Sciences* 1 (2004): 59-77. doi:10.1076/evms.1.1.59.23763.

<sup>144</sup> These are the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) (formerly the European Fisheries Fund [EFF]), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the Cohesion Fund (of which the European Territorial

In France, the implementation of Natura 2000 was managed by the national government until 2002. Even though there were many stakeholders involved, such as environmental NGOs, farmers, hunters, land owners, municipality mayors, nature protection authority, state forestry services and tourism organisations, the sites were nominated without consulting them. As a result, there were many conflicts between representatives of the rural world and the government, and most stakeholders were opposed to the implementation of Natura 2000:

The decision to neglect broader social apprehension resulted in the creation of a movement against N2000 called ‘Group 9’. Group 9 consisted almost entirely of representatives from agricultural interests. [...] ‘Group 9’ lobbied politicians heavily for a suspension in N2000 activities.<sup>145</sup>

As a result, the government “decided in 2002 to set up consultation processes in all of the French Natura 2000 sites related to the development of the management plans”.<sup>146</sup> A system of public-private contracts was also established to cover costs due to changes in management and compensate for the loss of income.<sup>147</sup> The general public in France, however, was generally not included in the implementation process or informed about Natura 2000 at first, which contributed to reinforcing the opposition to the network. However, several efforts have been made over the years to improve the implementation and consultation processes. Today, Natura 2000 is generally well accepted in France, both by local actors and the general public.

### **3.5 The implementation of Natura 2000 within the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes**

Within the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes, the Natura 2000 network contributes towards the managing and functioning of 259 nature sites which amounts to 13,3% of the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes surface area. These sites were identified for the quality, scarcity or fragility of their fauna and flora and habitats. There are Natura 2000 sites in 116 townships of the territory but the Park’s *Syndicat Mixte* manages eight Natura 2000 sites spread over 90 townships.

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Cooperation3 is a component), the Financial Instrument for the Environment (LIFE) and the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (Horizon 2020) (formerly the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Development [FP7]). See Maria Geitzenauer et al., "The Challenge of Financing the Implementation of Natura 2000 – Empirical Evidence from six European Union Member States", *Forest Policy and Economics* 82 (2017): 3-13, doi:10.1016/j.forpol.2017.03.008.

<sup>145</sup> Darren McCauley, "Sustainable Development and the ‘Governance Challenge’: the French Experience with Natura 2000", *European Environment* 18, no. 3 (2008): 152-167, doi:10.1002/eet.478.

<sup>146</sup> Marieke Blondet et al., "Participation in the Implementation of Natura 2000: A Comparative Study of six EU Member States", *Land Use Policy* 66 (2017): 346-355, doi:10.1016/j.landusepol.2017.04.004.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

Among them peatlands, meadows, ridges, and hills are concerned: Artense, Chaîne des Puys, Cézallier, Massif Cantalien and Special Protection Area (SPA) of the Mounts and Lead of Cantal, Monts Dore, peatlands in the northeastern part of Cantal and wetlands in Riom-es-Montagnes.<sup>148</sup> The *Syndicat Mixte* ensures the implementation of actions for biodiversity, while taking into account economic uses and activities. Various approaches are developed and listed in a document setting out the objectives to achieve. These objectives include restauration and maintenance of natural pathways, initiation of studies (on the habitats, peatlands, forests, etc.), awareness-raising and communication towards the general public and pupils, surveillance and negotiation of land uses. The *Syndicat Mixte* also provides support and help regarding contractualisation processes and project elaboration concerning the Natura 2000 charter, as well as Natura 2000 contracts and, territorial agri-environmental measures between farmers and the State. It also provides help and advice to project bearers. According to the *Syndicat Mixte*'s activity report, the main actions carried out in 2017 concerned follow-up, advice and help to project bearers regarding for instance, the drafting of a farming contract.<sup>149</sup> The Syndicat also published press releases and developed a pedagogical programme about biodiversity. It ensured furthermore that Nature Wardens were present to carry out surveillance and awareness-raising missions, in support of pastoral activity, ecological watches, and restoration and maintenance of pathways. The Natura 2000 network, which was launched at a European scale, is thus a key tool within the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes in order to protect its natural heritage.

### **3.6 Adherence of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes to the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas: a sustainable tourism development strategy**

In 1995, EUROPARC Federation adopted the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas. The Charter initiative was launched two years after the EUROPARC report "Loving them to death", calling for sustainable tourism in Europe's Protected Areas.<sup>150</sup> "Parks for Life", the 1994 World Conservation Union's action programme for protected areas in Europe, also included the creation of a Charter as one of its priorities.<sup>151</sup> Therefore, the charter was adopted in a context of growing awareness of sustainable development. EUROPARC

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<sup>148</sup> "Réseau Natura 2000", [parcdesvolcans.fr, http://www.parcdesvolcans.fr/Agir/Des-enjeux-des-actions/Reserves-et-sites-naturels/Natura-2000-MAEC/Reseau-Natura-2000/\(language\)/fre-FR](http://www.parcdesvolcans.fr/Agir/Des-enjeux-des-actions/Reserves-et-sites-naturels/Natura-2000-MAEC/Reseau-Natura-2000/(language)/fre-FR) (accessed May 4, 2019).

<sup>149</sup> Syndicat Mixte du Parc Naturel Régional des Volcans d'Auvergne. "Rapport d'activités du Syndicat Mixte du Parc 2017 en application de la charte du Parc Naturel Régional des Volcans d'Auvergne adoptée en 2013", 2017.

<sup>150</sup> "Sustainable Tourism", [europarc.org, https://www.europarc.org/sustainable-tourism/](https://www.europarc.org/sustainable-tourism/) (accessed May 8, 2019).

<sup>151</sup> EUROPARC Federation, "Manual of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas", 2007, <http://www.europarc.it/PDF/manual.english.may.2007.pdf> (accessed May 8, 2019).

Federation was aware that “not only are parks themselves facing challenges and pressure from visitation and misuse on the land they manage, but have the opportunity and potential to act as catalysts for sustainability and life style changes at a local and regional and indeed national level”.<sup>152</sup> The Charter is defined as a practical management tool enabling Protected Areas to develop tourism in a sustainable way.<sup>153</sup> It is necessary for protected areas to become recognized as sustainable destinations before entering the Charter process. To this end, EUROPARC Federation has drafted technical guidelines document on “How to become a EUROPARC Sustainable Destination”<sup>154</sup>, explaining the process to enable areas to become Sustainable Destinations. The guidelines include five principles:

- Giving priority to protection,
- Contributing to sustainable development,
- Engaging all stakeholders,
- Planning sustainable tourism effectively,
- Pursuing continuous improvement.<sup>155</sup>

The Charter process itself includes three parts. The first part is about sustainable tourism for the protected areas. It establishes a framework for a sustainable tourism strategy to be worked out by actors within the protected area itself. The second section targets local tourism businesses. Indeed, the protected area authority needs local businesses as partners to develop its tourism strategy. Local tourism businesses and the protected area authority can sign a European Charter Partnership Agreement to become official partners. The third part sets up a framework for tour operators that includes sustainable development into their products. Therefore, tour operators must ensure that visitors they attract respect the protected area’s heritage resources. After completion of the three parts of the Charter process, the tourism strategy proposed by the protected area authority is then implemented together with local tourism partners, other business sectors, authorities, and local people.<sup>156</sup> According to Patrizia Rossi, the former President of the EUROPARC Federation, the Charter “is a very useful tool for Parks because, it allows the involvement of all stakeholders in a common sustainable

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<sup>152</sup> "Sustainable Tourism", europarc.org, <https://www.europarc.org/sustainable-tourism/> (accessed May 8, 2019).

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> EUROPARC Federation, "How to become a EUROPARC Sustainable Destination", 2019, [https://www.europarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/EUROPARC-Sustainable-Destinations\\_Technical-guidelines-ECSTPA\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/EUROPARC-Sustainable-Destinations_Technical-guidelines-ECSTPA_EN.pdf). (accessed May 8, 2019).

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> EUROPARC Federation, "Manual of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas", 2007, <http://www.europarc.it/PDF/manual.english.may.2007.pdf> (accessed May 8, 2019).

tourism strategy through a participatory process”.<sup>157</sup> The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas has been used as an economic model of governance that turns Protected Areas into sustainable destinations for more than twenty years. It is an essential tool for protected areas such as RNPs since it contributes to delivering social, economic and environmental benefits.

In the case of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes, the participatory approach was also used to create a sustainable tourism development strategy. The Park’s adherence to the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas came about in June 2009. According to the Park’s website, the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes’ strategy aims to give real meaning to travelling by promoting a kind of tourism that places human beings at the center of an environmentally and history friendly development process.<sup>158</sup> The Auvergne Volcanoes attract new visitors each year, and since the Park covers a wide area and has various kinds of attractive heritages, it offers the ideal conditions for ecotourism and discovery of the natural and rural heritage. Since tourism is the primary activity within the Park, together with agriculture, it is essential to protect the Park’s territory and to implement measures that can benefit both the environment and human beings. The Massif Central Nature Parks Association, of which the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes is a part, has chosen the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas to turn Nature Parks into key territories for sustainable tourism across the Massif Central. A support methodology for tourism companies proposed in the second part of the Charter has involved more than 80 providers, collectively engaged on a scale encompassing the entire Massif Central. This is a significant number, since there is a total of 260 tourism companies in 88 protected areas at a European scale.<sup>159</sup>

The RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes has also developed initiatives regarding the third part of the Charter process. These involve tour operators. The EUROPARC Federation published a brochure in 2012 entitled “Learning from Case Studies of certified Charter parks in Europe”.<sup>160</sup> This document presents several best practice examples selected from Charter parks to show how EUROPARC’s Charter standards are implemented locally. In the case of the RNP of

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<sup>157</sup> EUROPARC Federation, *Patrizia Rossi - European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas*, video, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uhqgKo8hl-E> (accessed May 8, 2019).

<sup>158</sup> "Stratégie Touristique", <http://www.parcdesvolcans.fr/Bienvenue/Nous/Nous-vivons-dans-un-territoire/Des-activites-economiques/Strategie-touristique> (accessed May 8, 2019).

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> EUROPARC Federation, "Learning from Case Studies of certified Charter parks in Europe", 2012, <https://www.europarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/1342.pdf> (accessed May 8, 2019).

Auvergne Volcanoes, the brochure focuses on tour operators. The IPAMAC association (*Association Inter Parcs du Massif Central*) involves ten RNPs across six regions in the centre of France that began to build partnerships in 2009 with tour operators interested in sustainable tourism co-operation.<sup>161</sup> The association ATR (*Agir pour un Tourisme Responsable*) is involved in these partnerships and an agreement was made between the RNPs, the tour operators and ATR. The agreement signatories are committed to:

further develop the tourism economy of the parks, offering to tourists new travel experiences in the region, promote a sustainable and harmonised development of the region, further develop public-private partnerships, working with travel agencies that share the values of protected areas, help tourism professionals, and agencies members of ATR, to be more visible and to further develop quality offers oriented to strong human and environmental values.<sup>162</sup>

Following this framework, the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes has become the official partner of Chamina Voyages, which is a local tour operator commercializing tours and trails with a leaflet or a professional guide within the Park. Thanks to the agreement, Chamina Voyages can bear the Park partnership label while selling its itineraries and tours. Thus, the Park develops actions regarding each part of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas' process which contribute to promote and enhance eco-friendliness while taking into account economic and social factors.

### **3.7 Budgetary and financial management of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes: the European share**

In France, Regional Nature Parks have two autonomous budgets: one operating budget and one equipment budget. Both are subject to local authority accounting rules. The operating budget is financed by statutory contributions from members of the parks' management bodies and by the ministry for the environment. The park's equipments and programmes are co-financed by local authorities and the ministries for environment, agriculture, culture, etc., but also by various European programmes. State and regional contributions are laid down in planning agreements and contracts.<sup>163</sup> Recently, the Parliament asked the to reduce public funding. As part of this task, an expenditure review (*Revue de dépenses*) was made.<sup>164</sup> The report acknowledges that

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> "Fonctionnement", parcs-naturels-regionaux.fr, <https://www.parcs-naturels-regionaux.fr/article/fonctionnement> (accessed May 8, 2019).

<sup>164</sup> Fédération des Parcs naturels régionaux de France, "Rapport d'activités 2017 de la Fédération des Parcs Naturels Régionaux de France", 2017, <https://www.parcs-naturels->

the RNP's manage reasonably well financially and that the level of expenditure is kept under control, although some vulnerability has been identified, such as the burden of fixed charges.<sup>165</sup> However, most of the financing is public, 10 percent coming from the state and 50 from the regions. Reducing this funding would lead to economic difficulties and complications in the management of the parks. Therefore, the European share of the RNPs budget is essential because the RNPs can rely on it. However, it only represents a fraction of the necessary funds: 3.36% in 2017 in the case of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes.

The RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes budgetary and financial management is summed up in the 2017 activity report.<sup>166</sup> The Park has one core budget and five annexed budgets. In the 2017 core budget, statutory contributions represented 47.50% of the operating costs. The total revenue was distributed as follows: 42.13% from the region, 8.17% from the State, 10.88% from the *départements*, 5.85% from townships and public inter-municipality cooperation establishment (EPCI), 4.99% from diverse sources such as water supply agencies, and 19.39% from reimbursement of ancillary financing costs. The European share was only 3.36% of the total, which amounted to € 98 390 for operating expenses, and was thus the smallest proportion of funding. However, Europe's contribution still makes a crucial difference, not least symbolically, and is guaranteed by the participatory approach of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas.

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Several initiatives have been launched at the European level to preserve the environment. These have an influence on sustainable tourism and RNPs, including more specifically, the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes. The European Landscape Convention, the project "Europe's Nature, Regional and Landscapes Parks", the First European Summit of Regional Nature Parks, the implementation and animation of Natura 2000 sites, and the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas all involve various stakeholders at European, national, and local levels. Regardless of whether these initiatives have a legal status as institutions or rather aim to raise public awareness, they all need to be examined from a multi-scalar angle. They imply top-

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[regionaux.fr/sites/federationpnr/files/document/centre\\_de\\_ressources/fpnrf-rapport\\_dactivites\\_2017\\_2.pdf](http://regionaux.fr/sites/federationpnr/files/document/centre_de_ressources/fpnrf-rapport_dactivites_2017_2.pdf) (accessed May 8, 2019).

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Syndicat Mixte du Parc Naturel Régional des Volcans d'Auvergne. "Rapport d'activités du Syndicat Mixte du Parc 2017 en application de la charte du Parc Naturel Régional des Volcans d'Auvergne adoptée en 2013", 2017.

down processes and they have shaped public policy in the case of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes. European institutions and structures have a significant role in creating the functional and legal framework for the Park, but the implementation of it all takes place locally. The RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes is an example of a European project with many participants, involving the EU institutions, the French state and government, the Park authority, local tourism stakeholders, local people, and the Park's visitors. Because of its status, the Park is a complex entity and each change in its management strategy, including its budgetary and financial management, has consequences at all levels.

## **Chapter 4. Sustainable Tourism and Deliberate Promotion of the Natural Heritage of the RNP Auvergne Volcanoes: Challenges and Reluctance**

In a 2013 report following a UN expert group meeting on Sustainable Tourism<sup>167</sup>, the European Commission listed the key challenges for the sustainability of European tourism: “reducing the seasonality of demand, addressing the impact of tourism transport, improving the quality of tourism jobs, maintaining and enhancing community prosperity and quality of life [...], minimizing resource use and production of waste, conserving and giving value to natural/cultural heritage, making holidays available to all”<sup>168</sup>, etc. Some of these challenges can also be observed at the level of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes, shaped by the Park’s specific features. The promotion of the Park’s natural heritage affects some individuals. Sustainable tourism objectives can be hard to achieve when colliding with land-use patterns and local habits. As noted earlier, a variety of stakeholders are involved in the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes, which naturally complicates the process. The following four major challenges faced in the Park will be discussed in this chapter: ecotourism versus mass tourism; nature-based tourism challenges within the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes; the need to reconcile conflicts of interests, and; the promotion of the Park, evolving from a state of nature to a state of saleable product while attracting large numbers of tourists.

### **4.1 Ecotourism as opposed to mass tourism**

In spite of the United Nations and various governments’ efforts to raise awareness on sustainability issues and the need for a more respectful kind of tourism, most tourists choose to go on conventional holidays including package tours, cruises, theme parks, sun-and-sea beach holidays, etc. However, ecotourism is a growing trend and is becoming a very dynamic sector of the tourism industry. It is also one of the fastest growing tourism sectors. Even though ecotourism is much more sustainable than mass tourism, it has been proven that it cannot replace it. Mass tourism involves an interaction and interdependence between various actors on a global scale whereas ecotourism remains on a local scale and is less profitable. Indeed, it implies a kind of self-sustaining tourism development, whereas mass tourism, especially in developing countries, “has created a dependence on export markets, increased the degree of

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<sup>167</sup> European Commission, "Challenges and opportunities for sustainable tourism development, the European Commission's actions to enhance sustainable tourism", 2013, [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/4119I.LELONEK\\_HUSTING\\_UN%20Expert%20meeting\\_Final.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/4119I.LELONEK_HUSTING_UN%20Expert%20meeting_Final.pdf) (accessed May 14, 2019).

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

foreign dominance and controlled the tourism sector.”<sup>169</sup> This section aims at demonstrating whether the issues caused by mass tourism on a global scale are also encountered at the scale of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes, as an increasing number of visitors is attracted by the Park. The solutions implemented to prevent the devastating consequences of large visitor flows will also be explored.

Mass tourism is much more profitable than ecotourism. It is also more visible and attracts tourists from different social classes. In Europe, international mass tourism started after the late 1950s in the islands and coastal areas of Mediterranean countries.<sup>170</sup> In order to understand what mass tourism is, it is necessary to understand what a mass tourist is. The concept of mass tourism has been explored by many tourism researchers since the late 20th century. Donald V. L. Macleod explains how tourists can be classified according to their behaviour and motivation.<sup>171</sup> He divides them into two main categories: package tourists and independent tourists. He defines the second category as tourists who “usually fit in [...] with the local environment and social structure [and] are associated with relatively slow growth rates and often lead to local ownership”.<sup>172</sup> On the contrary, package tourists do not adapt easily to the local environment. They are often looking for western amenities, and “are associated with rapid growth rates and often lead to the restructuring of the local economy”.<sup>173</sup> Mass tourists fall under the package tourists’ category. They feel safer while maintaining a kind of “environmental bubble” while being abroad and are very low on adventurousness. Vilhelmiina Vainikka focuses on the stereotypes of mass tourists and finds out that academic literature often suggests that something is missing in the mass tourists’ category, compared to the other categories of tourists.<sup>174</sup> For instance, mass tourists are often considered as individuals that are not interested in the local culture of their holiday destination, unlike explorers, drifters or off-beat tourists.<sup>175</sup> Tourism researchers often categorize tourists according to the assumed authenticity of their tastes. Entertainment and leisure are usually associated with inauthenticity, whereas learning and immersing oneself in a different culture is considered as more authentic.

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<sup>169</sup> Maryam M. Khan, "Tourism Development and Dependency Theory: Mass Tourism vs. Ecotourism", *Annals of Tourism Research* 24, no. 4 (1997): 988-991, doi:10.1016/s0160-7383(97)00033-9.

<sup>170</sup> Bill Bramwell, *Coastal Mass Tourism* (Clevedon: Channel View Publications, 2010), 1-357.

<sup>171</sup> Donald V.L. Macleod, *Tourism, Globalisation and Cultural Change: An Island Community Perspective*, 1st ed. (Channel View Publications, 2004), 68.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Vilhelmiina Vainikka, "Stereotypes and Professional Reflections on Mass Tourism: Focusing on Tour Operators, Mass Tourism Destinations and Mass Tourists", *Études Caribéennes*, no. 31-32 (2015), doi:10.4000/etudescaribeennes.7609.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

According to mass tourists' motives for travelling, most of them would be evaluated as inauthentic. However, such definitions can hardly be seen as objective. According to Vilhelmiina Vainikka, definitions always vary depending on who defines, practises, and talks about this phenomenon.<sup>176</sup> Statements about mass tourism are sometimes negative and provocative and the behaviour of mass tourists is often compared to that of herded animals because of their herd instinct. The semantic field of breeding is very commonly used to mock mass tourists. In western countries, mass tourists often recall the legend of Panurge's sheep who launched themselves over a cliff edge, because they were not able to think independently and could only follow each other.

If mass tourism is often criticised and ridiculed, it is also because it is responsible for many negative consequences. Maryam M. Khan studied the impact of mass tourism on developing countries:

The disparity between the tourists and the natives has created antagonism between them. Mass tourism inevitably has an impact on the value system, individual behavior, family relationships, moral conduct, creative expression, traditional ceremonies, and community organizations, as well as destroying the sociocultural framework of the host country as a whole.<sup>177</sup>

Mass tourism has an impact on the land, which is used to build beach resorts, hotels and stores. Multinational tourism companies, airlines and chain hotels are usually in favour of free trade and open borders.<sup>178</sup> In order to meet the increasing demand of mass tourists, there is a loss of coastal land, and food is imported instead of using local products. Consequently, there is a withdrawal of working force from the agricultural field while territories face massive land privatisation. Meanwhile, the tourism industry needs more labor to meet the growing demand, which sometimes lead to the exploitation of workers. In some areas, such as Riviera Maya in Mexico, workers are underpaid and do not have social protection or union coverage. Mass tourism also has impacts on local people's identity. Indeed, mass tourism brings outsiders into relatively homogeneous neighbourhoods which creates a clash of cultures. According to Jeremy Boissevain, "the arrival of outsiders creates new categories of 'us' and 'them' and often generates suspicion, jealousy and fear".<sup>179</sup> As a result, local people redefine and project their

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Maryam M. Khan, "Tourism Development and Dependency Theory: Mass Tourism vs. Ecotourism", *Annals of Tourism Research* 24, no. 4 (1997): 988-991, doi:10.1016/s0160-7383(97)00033-9.

<sup>178</sup> Martha Honey, *Ecotourism and Sustainable Development*, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2008), 34-552.

<sup>179</sup> Jeremy Boissevain, *Factions, Friends and Feasts: Anthropological Perspectives on the Mediterranean*. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), 229-310.

own identity through rituals, and sometimes through violence. This forced confrontation between a native population and a foreign crowd generates cultural conflicts. In addition to the aforementioned negative consequences, the ecological footprint (EF) must also be considered when evaluating the impacts of mass tourism:

The EF measures the amount of biologically productive land and sea area an individual, a region, a given population or a human activity requires to produce all the resources it consumes and to absorb the corresponding emissions (such as carbon dioxide from fossil use), using prevailing technology and resource management practices.<sup>180</sup>

Transportation (planes, cars, buses, etc.), tourist accommodation, tourist infrastructures, leisure activities and other components involve various forms of consumption (arable land, pasture, sea space, forest, etc.) and threaten the environment's ability to regenerate. Mass tourism can therefore contribute to the scarcity of natural resources and increases pollution.

In response to these serious issues within the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region, a "Meet and Match" meeting was organised in September 2018.<sup>181</sup> Its main goal was to gather tourism stakeholders from the region in order to discuss tourism issues and challenges while elaborating action plans. On this occasion, the vice-president of the region in charge of tourism declared that the regional ambitions were to get Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes into the top five European tourist areas. In order to address prospective issues related to mass tourism, all meeting attendants agreed to write a manifesto on sustainable tourism. This calls for raising awareness of the impacts of tourism and of the need to act responsibly while facing environmental, economic, and climatological challenges. Various topics were discussed at the meeting, such as the establishment of regenerative economy benefiting everyone, and the necessity to forge ties between tourists and local people to address the gap caused by mass tourism. Mutual marketing funds have already been launched with several partners, as well as a service platform to elaborate action plans. In addition, all tourism stakeholders can share their knowledge and experience on a Facebook page for tourism professionals. These are indications of regional involvement to make tourism more sustainable in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Mehdi Marzouki, Géraldine Froger and Jérôme Ballet, "Ecotourism versus Mass Tourism. A Comparison of Environmental Impacts Based on Ecological Footprint Analysis", *Sustainability* 4, no. 1 (2012): 123-140, doi:10.3390/su4010123.

<sup>181</sup> Frédéric Coureau, "Face aux fractures du tourisme de masse, Auvergne Rhône-Alpes s'engage dans un tourisme bienveillant", *Le Courrier Des Entreprises*, 2018, <https://www.lecourrierdesentreprises.fr/face-aux-fractures-du-tourisme-de-masse-auvergne-rhone%E2%80%90alpes-sengage-dans-un-tourisme-bienveillant/> (accessed June 3, 2019).

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

## 4.2 Nature-based tourism challenges within the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes

Ecotourism is often seen as a way to address the impacts of mass tourism. “One of the tenets of ecotourism is the support of locally owned businesses, local hiring, and local purchasing, all practices that are circumscribed under the growing number of international trade agreements and organizations.”<sup>183</sup> The RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes’ institutions are constantly increasing their efforts to turn nature-based tourism into ecotourism. Indeed, these two terms are not synonymous. Nature-based tourism can be defined as “any tourism that takes place in relatively undisturbed areas”<sup>184</sup> while ecotourism must meet specific criteria, such as: minimizing impact, building environmental and cultural awareness and respect, providing positive experiences for both visitors and hosts, providing direct financial benefits and empowerment for local people, and raising sensitivity to host countries’ political, environmental, and social climate.<sup>185</sup> Thus, nature-based tourism means “experiencing nature areas” whereas ecotourism is more sustainability-oriented. Within the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes, the impacts of mass tourism are non-existent. According to Auvergne VolcanSancy Tourist Office’s Director, Judith Dumons, most visitors are French: in 2018, there were only 5.8% visitors coming from abroad, most of them were European (German, British, Belgian, Dutch and Spanish tourists mainly).<sup>186</sup> There are no mass tourists since “most visitors come in pairs on their own. There are also individual tourists and families with young children, followed by dynamic and adventurous seniors on hike trips.”<sup>187</sup> In 2017, 12 000 tourists visited Auvergne VolcanSancy Tourist Office. Visitors coming to the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes without using the Tourist Office services are not recorded, but the overall number of tourists is far below mass tourism flows. However, during the tourist season, the number of tourists still becomes problematic: “Lakeside bathing beaches are overcrowded sometimes, and there is also an excessive number of visitors climbing into the most famous volcanoes’ ridges.”<sup>188</sup> However, the Park’s institutions are developing and promoting itineraries off the beaten track to reduce congestion in some sites. This strategy has been developed even more since the Park joined UNESCO.

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<sup>183</sup> Martha Honey, *Ecotourism and Sustainable Development*, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2008), 34-552.

<sup>184</sup> Gyan P. Nyaupane, "Ecotourism versus Nature-based Tourism: Do Tourists Really Know the Difference?", *Anatolia* 18, no. 1 (2007): 161-165, doi:10.1080/13032917.2007.9687044.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Judith Dumons, interviewed by Pauline Chaussende, March 28, 2019.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

Regarding ecotourism and sustainable tourism within the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes, the *Syndicat Mixte* implements measures locally. Still, the promotion of sustainable tourism within this area remains relatively low. Indeed, according to Judith Dumons, Auvergne VolcanSancy Tourist Office lacks visibility and financial resources to ensure efficient awareness-raising in this regard.<sup>189</sup> However, the Sustainable Economy sector Manager of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes, Eve Alcaide, is currently working on new sustainable actions to launch in cooperation with Auvergne VolcanSancy Tourist Office. One of her goals would be to increase awareness among tourist accommodation owners by providing eco-citizen guides. Owners are encouraged to take small actions on a daily basis to preserve the environment while sharing them with their guests. In this way, both local people and tourists would be involved. It is interesting to notice that there is some dissonance in the ways Judith Dumons and Eve Alcaide talk about sustainable tourism within the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes. Indeed, while conducting individual interviews with each of them, it became clear that the tourist office's Director regretted the lack of resources to make tourism more sustainable within the Park's area. On the contrary, the Sustainable Economy sector Manager of the Park declared that sustainable tourism and the protection of the Park's heritages were the *Syndicat Mixte*'s priorities and that everything was being made to make sure that tourism within the Park becomes more sustainable. According to her, the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' adherence to the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism plays a key role in making efficient changes in this regard: "[The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism] allowed a better communication with tourist offices on the Park's territory which makes the implementation of sustainable tourism easier than it was ten years ago."<sup>190</sup>

### **4.3 Reconciliation of Interests within the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes**

Regardless of the scope of sustainable tourism operations run in the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes, the promotion of sustainable tourism and the protection of the Park's natural heritage are meeting reluctance, and even opposition in some cases. It seems impossible to please tourism stakeholders, local people and tourists at the same time. Reconciling the goals of environmental preservation with the interests of those living and working on the Park's territory is a complicated technical and diplomatic task. Investigating on the general opinion regarding sustainability within the Park revealed three main issues: a lack of knowledge

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Eve Alcaide, interviewed by Pauline Chaussende, April 4, 2019.

regarding the Park and environmental issues, a lack of sustainable alternatives provided to local people, and communication issues with stakeholders and the general public.

While tourism and environment experts are increasing their efforts to turn the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' territory into a sustainable land, it has become clear that local people are inadequately informed or even uneducated about environmental threats. Judith Dumons explained that two townships on the Park's territory refused to sign the current Park's charter because their political beliefs were not in line with the obligations of the Charter's signatories: "I will not tell you who, but I can tell you why. These are rural towns very sparsely populated whose inhabitants are farmers and hunters who are involved in polluting or biodiversity-threatening activities. They believe ecological policies are not legitimate and hamper their daily life."<sup>191</sup> Indeed, it is not unusual to see locals riding quad bikes or motocrosses on the Park's protected pathways, for instance. According to Eve Alcaide, this issue stems from the misinformation of this people who do not understand the Park's concept: "They do not know why the Park was created and what it is used for. They do not feel like they belong to it or like they can play a significant role in nature preservation. Neither do they know what the *Syndicat Mixte* is."<sup>192</sup> Thus, it seems that the gap between decision-makers and local people contributes to alienate the latter and obstructs the achievement of the standards necessary to leave nature unspoiled.

Regarding hunting within the Park's territory, it is necessary to know that French hunting policies have been the subject of controversy for many years. In 2010, the European Court of Justice condemned France in regard to Natura 2000 sites, for putting into legislation that when hunting follows the right regulatory conditions, it does not cause any disturbance.<sup>193</sup> Indeed, the Court considered that such conditions were not considered in French management plans for natural areas. Therefore, the Court was unable to pronounce itself on the issue of possible disturbance caused by hunters. However, even though the sentence in question was amended, hunting is still legal and allowed in Natura 2000 sites. Another noteworthy incident occurred in 2016, when Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes' President, Laurent Wauquiez, reduced

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<sup>191</sup> Judith Dumons, interviewed by Pauline Chaussende, March 28, 2019.

<sup>192</sup> Eve Alcaide, interviewed by Pauline Chaussende, April 4, 2019.

<sup>193</sup> "La chasse dans les espaces protégés.", oncfs.gouv.fr, 2011, <http://www.oncfs.gouv.fr/Fiches-juridiques-chasse-ru377/La-chasse-dans-les-espaces-protéges-ar1219> (accessed June 3, 2019).

subsidies granted to nature protection and organic agriculture associations.<sup>194</sup> Instead, he provided the Regional Federation of Hunters with a three-year grant of nearly 3 million euros. The Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes' delegated Vice-President declared that there should be no monopoly regarding biodiversity protection and that hunters played a significant role in the preservation process. Laurent Wauquiez was accused of political patronage and blamed for neglecting the environment.<sup>195</sup> The issue of hunting in rural and protected areas has always been divisive in France and opposes hunting associations or lobby groups and environmental stewards.

Another impediment to an efficient protection of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' natural heritage is the lack of sustainable alternatives provided to local people. Indeed, even though local people are willing to implement eco-friendly practices at home and in their daily lives, sustainable alternatives are not suitable or available. Two examples can be given regarding this issue: wood-energy and pollution. In the first case, most people cannot opt for wood-energy because a significant storage space is needed, and some households do not have enough space. Moreover, wood-energy can require complex and time-consuming maintenance and a continual presence is needed. As a result, most people choose electrical, gas or fuel energy. Another issue is transportation. Even though local people would be willing not to use their car, there is no alternative. In a remote place such as the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' area, there is almost no public transport. It is common that every person has a car within a single household. The *Syndicat Mixte*'s 2017 activity report contains information on this challenge, which has become one of the Park's most serious concerns since 60% of greenhouse gas emissions are caused by cars within the Park.<sup>196</sup> In response, the *Syndicat Mixte*'s staff launched a car-pooling day on June 22, 2017. The main goal was to encourage people not to drive cars on their own to minimise the number of journeys per person. However, there is no sustainable solution in the long run and local people do not have any other choice than driving which creates conflicts between the Park's management team and the inhabitants.

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<sup>194</sup> "Pour protéger sa biodiversité, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes préfère les chasseurs aux « bobos »", [https://www.lemonde.fr/biodiversite/article/2016/09/14/pour-protger-sa-biodiversite-auvergne-rhone-alpes-prefere-les-chasseurs-aux-bobos-des-villes\\_4997659\\_1652692.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/biodiversite/article/2016/09/14/pour-protger-sa-biodiversite-auvergne-rhone-alpes-prefere-les-chasseurs-aux-bobos-des-villes_4997659_1652692.html) (accessed 4 June 2019)

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Syndicat Mixte du Parc Naturel Régional des Volcans d'Auvergne, "Rapport d'activités du Syndicat Mixte du Parc 2017 en application de la charte du Parc Naturel Régional des Volcans d'Auvergne adoptée en 2013", 2018.

One of the most important issues regarding preservation of nature and sustainable tourism within the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes is a lack of communication with stakeholders and the general public. Local people started to protest in the 1990s regarding the implementation of Natura 2000 sites: “In the mid 1990s, the French Government froze the implementation of Natura 2000 in response to strong opposition from many stakeholder groups. The latter felt alienated from the process and resentful of the fact that they had not been consulted over the choice of sites, many of which were in private ownership.”<sup>197</sup> In order to include local people more, a planning system and management groups involving local landowners and stakeholders have been developed. Even though dialogue was eventually re-established, it seems that this is still an issue. According to Eve Alcaide, top-bottom processes within the Park do not really take into consideration local people: “We are working on this issue and we would like to include them more, but they feel like they are not fitting in. The scientific and political jargons cause a disconnect between experts and local people who are feeling overwhelmed and misunderstood.”<sup>198</sup> However, these communication issues are taken very seriously because local people can be agents of change within their own communities.

It seems that several conflicts and issues must be resolved to reconcile the goals of environmental preservation with the interests of those living and working on the Park’s territory. Locals’ lack of knowledge regarding the Park and environmental issues, as well as the lack of sustainable alternatives provided, and communication issues with stakeholders and the general public contribute to slowing down nature preservation and sustainable tourism processes. These concerns need to be addressed to work more efficiently and ensure a sustainable future for the Park.

#### **4.4 Promotion of the Park: from a state of nature to a state of saleable product**

The creation of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes has created an institutional and legal framework for nature activities and has turned the Park into a saleable product. Indeed, the Park’s natural and cultural heritages have been commodified since the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes has become an outward-looking institution. Even though the Park first aimed to

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<sup>197</sup> European Commission, Environment Directorate General "LIFE-Nature: Communicating with Stakeholders and the General Public", *LIFE Focus*, 2004, 9, [https://www.europarc.org/communication-skills/pdf/Life-Nature\\_Communications%20with%20stakeholders%20and%20the%20general%20public.pdf](https://www.europarc.org/communication-skills/pdf/Life-Nature_Communications%20with%20stakeholders%20and%20the%20general%20public.pdf) (accessed June 5, 2019).

<sup>198</sup> Eve Alcaide, interviewed by Pauline Chaussende, April 4, 2019.

providing valuable benefits in terms of nature preservation and sustainable development, tourism has built a strong customer orientation.

The RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes is attracting more and more tourists and everything is done to create an environment where tourism can flourish. The number of accommodations that have been developed over time proves it. Auvergne VolcanSancy's website counts around 100 furnished lodgings, 6 unusual and original accommodations, 12 hotels, 16 guest houses, 12 campsites and group accommodations.<sup>199</sup> These kinds of accommodation only represent a small portion of tourist places available on the Park's territory. Indeed, owners who do not pay fees to the Tourist Office cannot have their accommodations displayed on Auvergne VolcanSancy's website. Moreover, Auvergne VolcanSancy only covers a specific area of the Park. Vulcania's website also has a specific page dedicated to accommodation.<sup>200</sup> It seems that tourism stakeholders target mainly holiday seekers aiming to stay at least a couple of days within the Park's area. In this way, tourists have a more beneficial impact on the local economy: they consume local products, pay their accommodation, and usually visit Vulcania whose entrance is charged.

Since the Auvergne volcanoes' inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List in July 2018, the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes has gained more visibility and attracts more tourists, including a more international public. The Chaîne des Puys – Limagne fault are now part of the list because this picturesque site is a tectonic arena. The UNESCO's World Heritage mission mainly aims at protecting natural and cultural heritages. Indeed, the main World Heritage goals are to “ensure the protection of their natural and cultural heritage [...], encourage participation of the local population in the preservation of their cultural and natural heritage [...], support States Parties' public awareness-building activities for World Heritage conservation”.<sup>201</sup> However, recognizing the value of the Park's landscape is ambivalent. On the one side, it provides more tools to protect the Park's landscapes and encourages international cooperation on this matter; on the other side, it is a market-oriented strategy for the Park's associations to attract more tourists and make more money.

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<sup>199</sup> "Hébergements de groupes - Office de Tourisme Auvergne Volcansancy", Office de Tourisme Auvergne Volcansancy, 2019, [https://www.auvergnevolcansancy.com/residence\\_hoteliere/](https://www.auvergnevolcansancy.com/residence_hoteliere/) (accessed June 5, 2019).

<sup>200</sup> "Séjours Vulcania", séjours.vulcania.com, 2019, <https://sejours.vulcania.com/> (accessed June 6, 2019).

<sup>201</sup> "World Heritage", whc.unesco.org, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/about/> (accessed June 6, 2019).

The Park's commodification meets with opposition from some locals who feel that tourism disturbs their daily life and poses a threat to environment preservation. Structures built for tourist usage are sometimes considered as visual pollution spoiling the landscape, but they contribute to boosting the region's economy. The science park Vulcania, for instance, which has been highly criticised since being set up, came fully on stream in the early 2010s. The number of visitors doubled between 2006 and 2010.<sup>202</sup> The entire local economy benefits from it: "[In 2007], a survey firm already estimated financial repercussions for the region between 32 and 48 million euros."<sup>203</sup> Collaboration with all tourism stakeholders within the Park's territory has been strengthened thanks to these economic benefits. Therefore, several partnerships have been formed in the past ten years and are reinforcing territorial cohesion while facilitating project planning and implementation.

Even though the Park's commodification benefits most tourism stakeholders, some local producers do not feel part of this process and feel let down. Nevertheless, it is possible to take advantage of the process for those who are brought into it. Integrated rural tourism involves "complementary use of local resources, empowerment of local entrepreneurs and promotion of the sustainability of environment, economy, society and culture".<sup>204</sup> Integrated rural tourism encourages rural producers that cannot compete on the basis of scale economies to grow by capitalizing on specific features of local environment and culture.<sup>205</sup> The SPRITE (Supporting and Promoting Integrated Tourism in Europe's Lagging Rural Regions) project was created to develop integrated rural tourism and focuses on institutional structures at the local, regional levels. A study on networking in relation to integrated rural tourism was conducted in Auvergne in 2007. It showed a lack of coordination among local actions and an excess of erosive competition instead of positive competition. The need for greater local participation in centralized decision making was also outlined.<sup>206</sup> Tools like the SPRITE project are particularly useful since they reveal the strengths and weaknesses of tourism management in rural regions and describe possible measures for improvement. Since most tourist places are adapting commercial branding tactics, region branding is also an efficient way to reconcile

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<sup>202</sup> "Auvergne : Vulcania Dynamise L'économie Locale", Servir le public, 2011,

<https://www.servirlepublic.fr/2011/09/auvergne-vulcania-dynamise-leconomie-locale/> (accessed June 6, 2019).

<sup>203</sup> "[En 2007], un cabinet d'études estimait déjà entre 32 et 48 millions d'euros les retombées financières sur la région", Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> Mary Cawley, Jean-Bernard Marsat and Desmond A. Gillmor, "Promoting Integrated Rural Tourism: Comparative Perspectives on Institutional Networking in France and Ireland", *Tourism Geographies* 9, no. 4 (2007): 405-420, doi:10.1080/14616680701647626.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

commodification with residents' involvement. However, it has to be implemented strategically and carefully. A research conducted by two French Marketing researchers Emeline Martin and Sonia Capelli showed that commodifying Auvergne "by associating the place brand name with local products [has] been met with scepticism."<sup>207</sup> The research suggests that residents may become concerned about firms taking advantage of the region brand, and encouraging "place brand managers [to] focus on place promotion rather than local product promotion, if they want residents' approval."<sup>208</sup> Branding the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes as a whole and not just as "a product origin label"<sup>209</sup> would make residents less reluctant towards branding. The research shows that place branding within the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes would improve current attempts to create participatory approaches involving local people. This strategy can be used as a tool to include locals by investigating their judgements of place-branding actions implemented on the Park's territory. If place-branding is based on the common elements of all parties, it can serve the interest of all stakeholders, including local people. Some more efforts are needed to include RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' residents more in tourism processes, but various solutions and tools exist to improve the current situation.

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Promoting the natural heritage of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes is sometimes faced with reluctance and misunderstanding. The Park's managing institutions have to cope with the increasingly large flows of visitors and the conflicts of interests, among other challenges. In order to turn the Park into an ecotourism site, many efforts must be made. Some initiatives have been introduced in this regard, but the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes lacks resources and visibility to make sustainable tourism more efficient. The inclusion of all stakeholders would be the first step towards ecotourism within the Park. Joint efforts, as well as better cooperation and consultation mechanisms would improve the Park's current situation and contribute to resolving its main issues and challenges.

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<sup>207</sup> Emeline Martin and Sonia Capelli, "Region Brand Legitimacy: Towards a Participatory Approach Involving Residents of a Place", *Public Management Review* 19, no. 6 (2016): 820-844, doi:10.1080/14719037.2016.1210908.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

## Concluding Remarks

The promotion of sustainable tourism within the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes is a complex task of striking the right balance between diverse stakeholders and various economic, social and environmental aspects. The Park's natural heritage is an essential tool in this regard. The RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' landscape presents very specific features that cannot be found in all protected areas. Indeed, volcanoes are emblematic elements of the Park that attract visitors and offer a unique scenery. How is the natural heritage of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes used as a tool to promote sustainable tourism on a regional scale within a European framework? This is the question that this thesis aimed to answer through an analysis of policymaking and implementation of sustainable tourism measures within the Park.

Our investigation of the various methods chosen by the Park's managing institutions to promote the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' natural heritage has provided significant elements of answers to our research questions: Are all stakeholders considered in the promotion of sustainable tourism within the Park? Is the sustainable tourism development strategy of the Park mainly shaped by a European framework? Is the promotion of sustainable tourism within the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes successful? Do the Park's managing institutions contribute to turn the Park's territory into a commodified heritage?

The Park's *Syndicat Mixte* as well as VolcanSancy Tourist Office play a significant role in the heritage commodification of the Park. They contribute to turning the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes into an outward-looking institution where tourism is of paramount importance. Whether it is about sustainability actions or heritage enhancement, both institutions have built their communication strategies around the Park's heritage. The Park's natural features are constantly used to increase the RNP's visibility. VolcanSancy Tourist Office's website presents the Park's territory as an unspoiled place where tourists can enjoy nature in its purest form. Landscape photographs can be found in all communication material provided both by the Tourist Office and the *Syndicat Mixte*. Moreover, everything is organised in order to attract more tourists so that they can spend a few days within the Park and enjoy its natural features. Guidebooks, websites, tourist accommodation, volcano theme park, etc., are targeting visitors while taking advantage of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' natural heritage. The Park 2013-2025 charter and the 2017 *Syndicat Mixte*'s activity report show that the territory is at the heart of the matter. The main aim of the Park's charter speaks for itself: it is a kind of moral contract

committing the State and local officials who adopt it to respect and apply measures supporting the territory's heritages. The Park's institutions seem to have two main goals: building a strong customer orientation and protecting the Park's natural heritages while applying the principles of sustainable tourism.

Tourism professionals contribute to commodifying the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' heritages while pursuing a liberal approach. However, the Park was first aiming at providing valuable benefits in terms of nature preservation and sustainable development. Therefore, sustainable tourism cannot be neglected. However, it seems that there is a lack of inclusion of all stakeholders, especially local people. The latter sometimes feel let down and alienated in top-down sustainable tourism processes designed for their territory, but without their participation. Moreover, implementing sustainable tourism is sometimes faced with misunderstanding or reluctance. Conciliating everyone's interests within the Park is a tough and demanding task. Although sustainable tourism implies the consideration of economic and ecological aspects, it cannot be successfully implemented without applying social principles. After conduction of research, I think the Park's residents could be more included thanks to consultation and inclusion mechanisms but one more important factor in this regard needs to be considered first: education. People cannot fully be integrated in sustainable tourism processes if they lack knowledge about the Park as an entity, and its managing institutions.

The European Union plays a significant role in the sustainable tourism development strategy of the Park. Several initiatives have been undertaken at a European level regarding environment preservation. The European Landscape Convention, the project "Europe's Nature, Regional and Landscapes Parks", the European Summit of Regional Nature Parks, the implementation of Natura 2000 sites and the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism have all contributed to creating a legal and institutional framework for RNPs, and more specifically the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes. The European Union also plays a role in the Park's budgetary and financial management. Regarding the 2017 core budget, Europe's share was rather small, but its contribution still makes a difference because the Park can rely on it. The European share is also important from a symbolic point of view, since it reinforces ties between the Park and the European Union. Since most of the legal regulations regarding the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes are designed at a European level, the European Union participation in the sustainable tourism development strategy of the Park is essential. It also recalls solidarity, joint efforts, and a multi-scalar involvement in sustainable tourism, which cannot be dealt with only locally. All

the European instruments impacting the Park regarding sustainable tourism show that, even in remote areas, the European Union contributes to developing sustainable strategies without leaving rural areas behind.

Many efforts are made at European, national, regional and local levels to develop sustainable tourism within the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes. Over decades, the Park has evolved from a state of nature to a state of saleable product, but sustainability is increasingly taken into account. Several initiatives have been launched and are planned in this regard. The RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' adherence to the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in 1995 has brought change within the Park. Indeed, it has increased the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' potential to change attitudes. In addition, the Park's *Syndicat Mixte* is thinking about creating eco-citizen guides providing information on small actions that can be applied daily to preserve the Park. However, according to VolcanSancy Tourist Office's Director, there are not enough financial resources to ensure efficient awareness-raising regarding sustainable tourism.

Promoting the natural heritage of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes is faced with several difficulties. The increasingly large flows of visitors within the Park raise the question of the sustainable future of the Park. The Park's main goal is to implement a successful kind of ecotourism but in spite of the initiatives introduced in this regard, it seems that many efforts still have to be made. The conciliation of interests within the Park remains one of the biggest challenges. Implementing sustainable tourism is sometimes faced with reluctance and misunderstanding. Finally, the commodification of the RNP of Auvergne Volcanoes' natural heritage is turning the Park from a state of nature to a state of saleable product. In this process, local people feel let down and alienated. All challenges are bound by a common thread: the lack of inclusion of all stakeholders, especially residents. In order to make tourism sustainable within the Park, more consultation and inclusion mechanisms would have to be implemented.

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