



## Naturalist data in the test of transparency

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# Naturalist's data under the test of transparency

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**Mountain observatories  
A global fair and workshop  
on social-ecological systems**

**Reno (Nevada) USA  
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# Background and framework



- Biodiversity is a world phenomenon which needs global knowledge based on even more data.
- In France, data on nature are mainly coming from local production carried out by associations and volunteers.
- Our framework encompasses the combination between local and global scale in data production :
  - 1) SINP, system of normalization of data production : rationalization and access to data
  - 2) Transparency : a process to highlight biodiversity (knowledge for action)and the right for citizens to receive information according to the goals of Aarhus convention.

# Approach and methodology

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**Research topic :** The process of building a global knowledge about biodiversity. How to move from a personalized way of collecting data at local scale to the large scale in the global world ?

**Research questions:**

1. Which conceptions of data are we able to identify among the associations ? Are they compatible with the conception which prevails in SINP ?
2. How do associations face with data standardization and their move ?

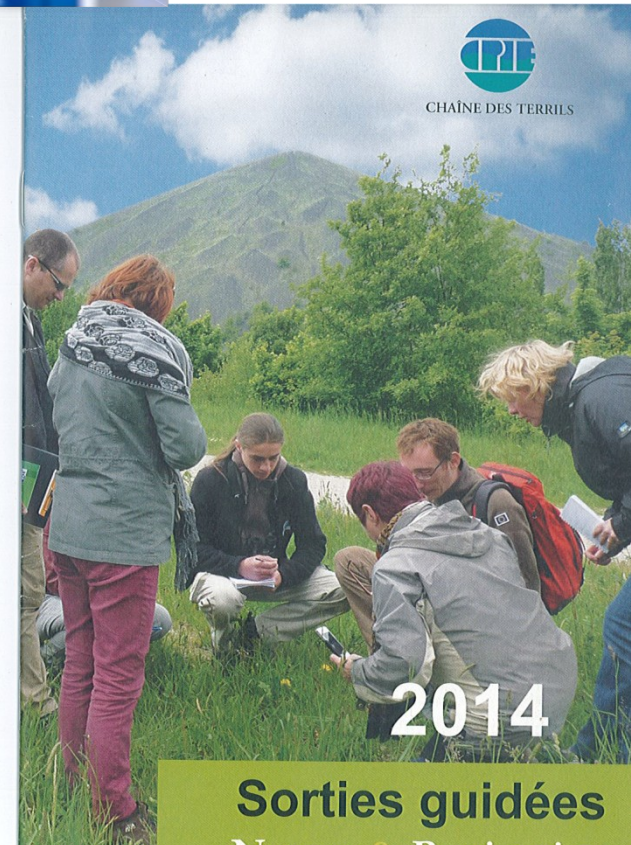
**Hypothesis 1 :** Transparency is essential to give confidence in the process of the building of the biodiversity global knowledge.

**Hypothesis 2:** Transparency threatens the way the associations and their volunteers operate.

# Field analysis and methodology



- Socio-anthropological approach :
  - the implementation of SINP at the national and regional scale
  - ethnography of a naturalist association + local NGOs interviews.
- Analysis at different levels : national (SINP) and regional/local level (associations)
- Field surveys in different French regions



CHAÎNE DES TERRILS

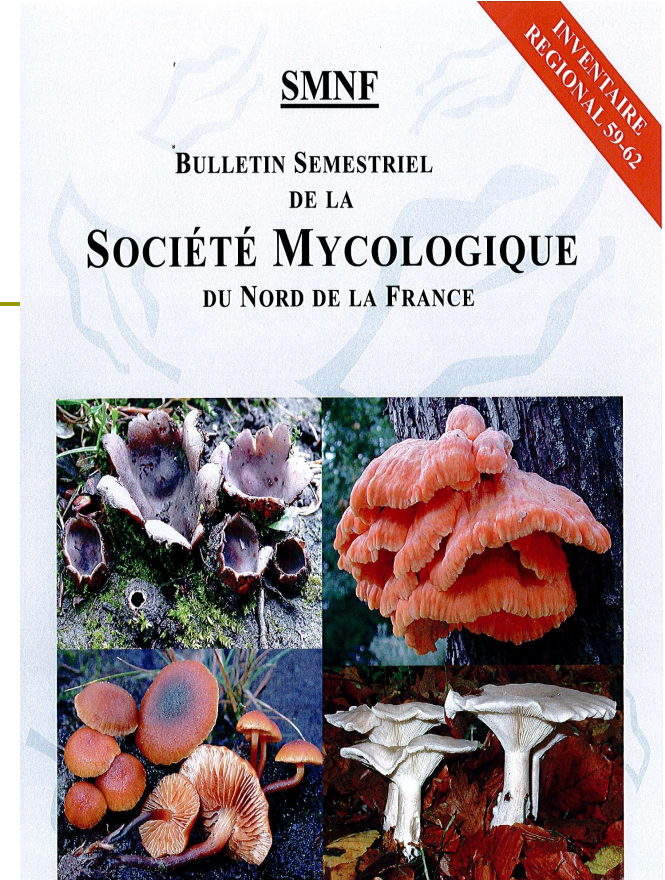
2014

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# Data as a complex object

- Data is an observation made in the fields, listed with the name of the taxon, it's place and date, the name of the observer. Data is also define as « a conventional information processed for computer ».
- Standardization can move local knowledge to global knowledge. Data is a tool for science and public action.
- This conception of data keeps aside practices and values which are the bases of the logic of volunteers of associations. In that way, data are in the same time objective and subjective.



# Collecting data within local associations : an embedded process

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- ❑ The specific feature of natural sciences =  
to watch living beings in the fields.
- ❑ Data production are based on scientific  
considerations + values + attachment styles :
  - attachment to land
  - attachment for certain species
  - attachment to a group
  - interpersonal trust
- ❑ Data production is made of various reasons :  
passion, desire for knowledge, wish to be  
involved in a group or to be recognize by  
others, responsibility for nature...





# The setting up of SINP : a process of disembedding data

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- ❑ SINP leads to the building of common systems of reference, common methodologies based on "experts systems" (Giddens, 2002).
- ❑ In a society of generalized communication, knowledge tends to be understood as information which is objective and exists independently of human beings (Tsoukas, 1997).
- ❑ This way of thinking can be considered as a kind of reductionism :
  - makes difficult to interpret the information.
  - leads to remove feeling for certain species.





# Conclusion

- ❑ 2 data conceptions :
  1. data as an instrument of measure and of government.
  2. data which is embedded in different kinds of attachments.
- ❑ Transparency as process of biodiversity visibility causes an impoverishment of knowledge.
- ❑ Transparency in terms of the right to access to information :
  - The Aarhus convention leads more to promote a large variety of market activities than to a citizen empowerment.
  - The access control to raw data has become a major issue for associations.

