

The blue dragonfly and social acceptance.

Think the social acceptance of nature reserves in the light of the acceptance of the research itself.

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« Tu ferais une thèse sur la libellule bleue et son impact sur la couleur des lacs, ça ne va pas jouer ni sur la gouvernance, etc... ça serait plus facile pour nous tu vois. [...] On est quand même plus dans l'analyse du mécanisme, de l'outil et de sa protection. Du coup, ça touche plus au cœur du moteur... qu'au système de freinage. » (directeur de structure de gestion de réserves naturelles)

"You would do a thesis on the blue dragonfly and its impact on the color of the lakes, it's not going to play on governance, etc... it would be easier for us. [...] We are still more in the analysis of the mechanism, the tool and its protection. So, it goes more to the heart of the engine... than to the braking system." (director of nature reserves management structure)

General context of the research

PhD started in 2019 on the subject of « social acceptance of the nature reserves », directed by Lionel Laslaz.

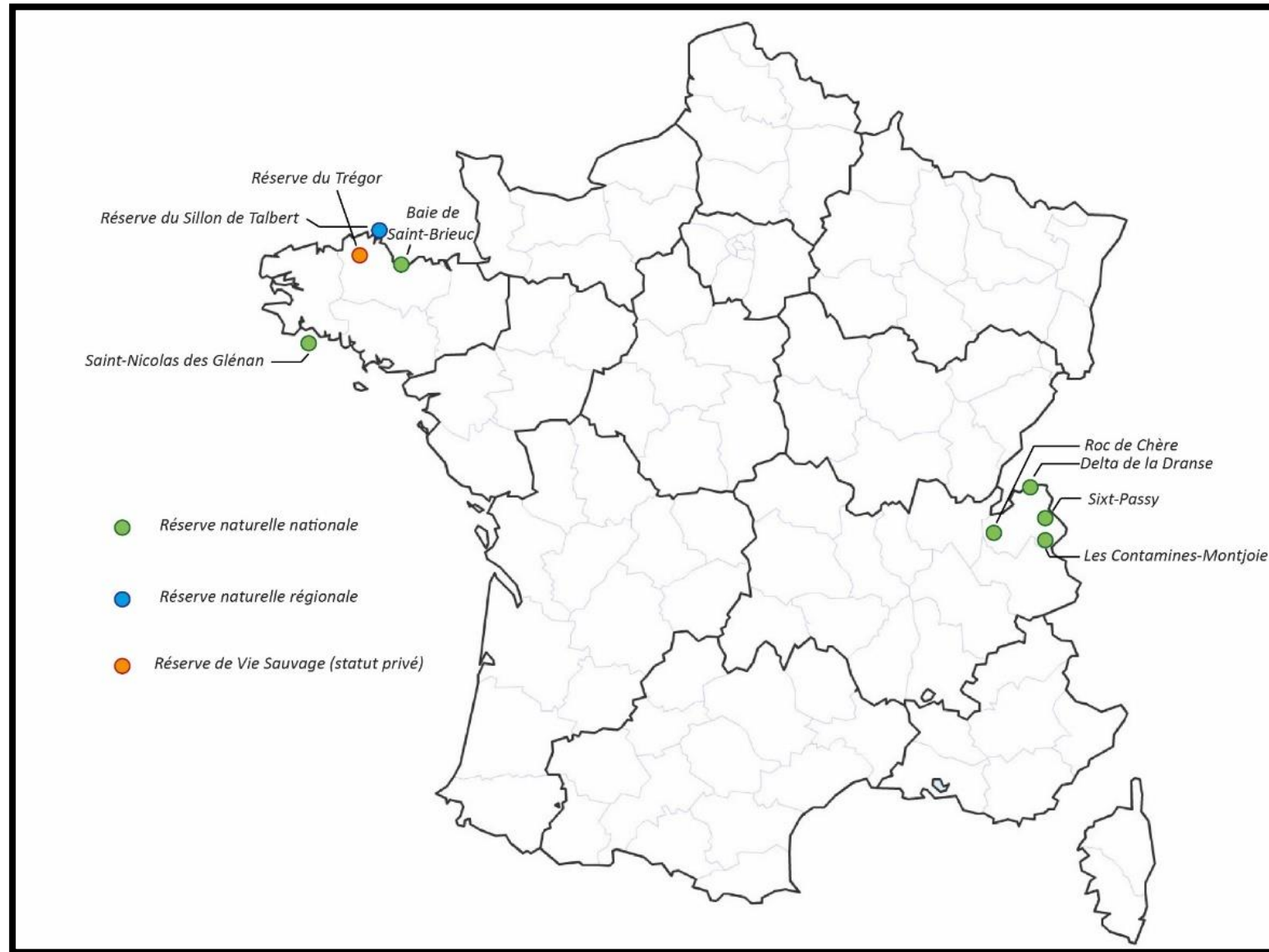
Financed by Savoie Mont Blanc Concil, OFB and Asters, conservatory of nature spaces.

Methodology : Qualitative approaches (semi-directional interviews and observations).

Haute Savoie : One stakeholder (Asters)

Bretagne : Several stakeholders (municipalities, associations, etc.)

Research fields



Lines of thought



Research on social acceptance have to be accepted before it can be deployed.



The « field refusal » turns out to be a key to entering the subject in greater depth.

What are the ins and the outs of a « field refusal » (Darmon, 2005) in geography ?
How is it illustrated in the context of protected areas ?

A beginning of the PhD
marked by an unexpected
reception from the
stakeholders

Bring to light an acceptable
field of investigation by trial
and error

Overcome the field refusal

A beginning of the PhD marked by an unexpected reception from the stakeholders

« *Quel intérêt pour nous d'étudier ça ?* » (un conservateur de réserve naturelle lors d'une réunion des réserves naturelles de Bretagne)

« *What's the point in studying this, for us?* » (a nature reserve stakeholder at a meeting of nature reserves, in Bretagne)

« *En fait je ne vois pas bien à quoi ton étude va nous servir à nous, gestionnaires.* » (une conservatrice de réserve naturelle, idem)

« *Actually, I don't see how your study will help us stakeholders.* » (a nature reserve stakeholder, idem)



✦ **Discrepancy between organizations at the national level (French Office for Biodiversity, Nature Reserves of France) and the local level of stakeholders**

✦ **Interest in the social sciences still limited in the field of protected areas management**

Call to the scientific research when it comes to answering a specific question or solving a problem (Wenger et al., 2002)

Bring to light an acceptable field of investigation by trial and error

A circumscribed research: what to work on? What to investigate?

« - Là, c'est chaud, c'est très tendu. Tu es un trublion. Tu viens perturber tout ça. Il y a eu du remue-ménage avec ton mail.

- ... Eh bien, je prends note de vos remarques... Mais je ne suis pas sûre de comprendre, qu'attendez-vous que je fasse, ou que je ne fasse pas maintenant ?

- Ah non non non rien du tout ! C'était pour te tenir au courant, c'était par souci de transparence ! »... (directeur de structure de gestion de réserves naturelles)

« - **Now, it's very complicated, it's very tense. You are a troublemaker. You disturb all this. There's been a fuss with your email.**

- **Well, I take notes of your remarks... But I'm not sure I understand. What do you expect me to do, or not do now?**

- **Oh no no no nothing at all! It was just to keep you informed, it was for the sake of transparency! »... (director of nature reserve management structure)**



Going beyond the limits allows the researcher to become aware of their existence

Bring to light an acceptable field of investigation by trial and error

A circumscribed research: who to meet? Who to interview?

« *Je ne suis pas sûre que M. *** soit très représentatif, il est souvent assez véhément envers la réserve...* » (extrait issu d'un échange avec une conservatrice)

*"I am not sure that Mr. *** is very representative, he is often quite vehement about the reserve..."* (extract from an interview with a stakeholder)

« *Tu sais il faut faire attention... M. *** c'est un peu Front National et compagnie... Il a parfois des positions... Il faut faire attention.* » (un ancien conservateur de réserve)

*"You know, you have to be careful... Mr. *** is a bit like Front National & cie... He sometimes has positions... You have to be careful."* (a former reserve stakeholder)



Devolution of representativeness: it replaces “validity” and “relevance”. It also supports the idea of necessary alignment of points of view.

Issue: to maintain control of “its” field (the reserve and its governance) for the stakeholders and to maintain control of the investigation that’s take place there and therefore to redirect or influence the researcher

Bring to light an acceptable field of investigation by trial and error

Also with the inhabitants



Alpage de Salvadon dans la réserve naturelle
de Sixt-Fer-à-Cheval / Passy

A. Robert, 2021

« Bon, d'accord pour discuter, mais à une condition. Je ne parlerai pas du loup. » (appel téléphonique en vue de fixer un rendez-vous avec un éleveur de brebis)

"All right, let's talk, but I have one condition. I won't talk about the wolf." (phone call to set up an appointment with a sheep farmer)

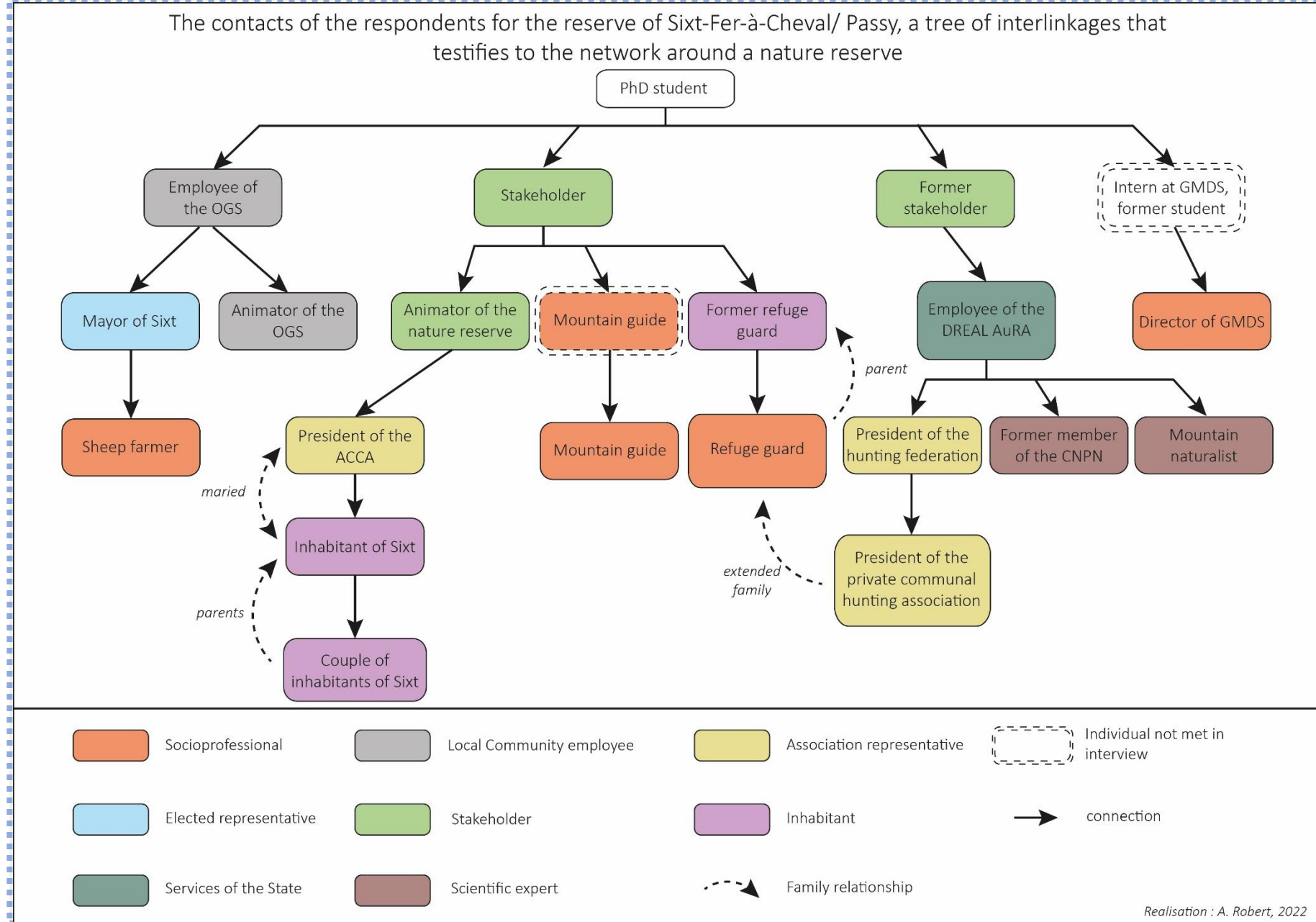
With some flexibility thanks to confidence building, highlighting belonging to the same group (agricultural world), recognition of legitimacy

« Si je refuse de parler du loup, c'est parce que ce qu'on peut dire est toujours déformé. Ces gens-là, ils comprennent pas. Mais si vous vous connaissez un peu... Une fois une stagiaire de je-sais-plus-où est venue, elle a directement commencé par nous demander pourquoi on n'aimait pas le loup... Alors elle, elle doit se souvenir de moi, je l'ai mise à la porte directement ! » (début de l'entretien avec l'éleveur en question)

"If I refuse to talk about the wolf, it's because what can be said is always distorted. These people, they don't understand. But if you know a bit [the agriculture sector]... Once a trainee from I don't know where came, she directly started by asking us why we didn't like the wolf... So she must remember me, I did kicked her out straight away!" (beginning of the interview with the farmer)

Overcome the field refusal

- Develop networks of actors more easily and measure the balance of power relative to the presence of a nature reserve
- See further than the limits set by managers



Realisation : A. Robert, 2022

Definition trial of the field refusal :

« Situation where an individual or a structure expresses a clear, more or less explicit and formulated opposition to a research initiative (research thesis, PhD, research program, etc.). Its role and/or status (administrative or political) lead them to take part in the investigation and its position gives them a sense of legitimacy to agree or disagree on the conduct of the research taking place on a field that concerns them directly. Sometimes, it is also on the orientations and methodological choices of research that the refusal of field intervenes. The interlocutor places themselves as dominant and can make the investigator understand this by various means (empathy, solidarity, threat, blackmail, etc.), more or less conscious. The field refusal is not always definitive. Sometimes the investigator has the flexibility to negotiate access to the field. »

Thank you for your attention

Merci pour votre attention