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Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/rga/3251>

DOI: 10.4000/rga.3251

ISSN: 1760-7426

This article is a translation of:

L'affirmation d'une opposition française au « Lyon-Turin » : un conflit entre liminarité et intermédialité -

URL : <https://journals.openedition.org/rga/3213> [fr]

Publisher:

Association pour la diffusion de la recherche alpine, UGA Éditions/Université Grenoble Alpes

Electronic reference

Kevin Sutton, “The Assertion of French Opposition to the “Lyon-Turin” Rail Link: a Conflict Between Liminality and Intermediate Spatiality”, *Journal of Alpine Research | Revue de géographie alpine* [Online], 104-1 | 2016, Online since 05 May 2016, connection on 08 December 2022. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/rga/3251> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/rga.3251>

This text was automatically generated on 8 December 2022.

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

This work was supported by the LABEX ITEM (ANR-10-LABX-50-01) within the “Investissements d’Avenir” programme operated by the French National Research Agency (ANR).

Introduction. A project in search of social validation: conflict as a resonant space

- ¹ For a long time, the project to build a new high-speed rail link between Lyon and Turin appeared to have the approval of both French politicians and regional public opinion. However, since 2012 and the discussions that took place during the public interest inquiry concerning access to the proposed base tunnel, numerous forms of opposition to the project have appeared and gathered momentum. The “Lyon-Turin” project is not new. The first technical proposals go back to 1987 when they were drawn up within the framework of discussions between the SNCF (France) and the FS (Italy). The project was included in the French national Master Plan for high-speed rail links in 1991 and was validated with respect to its contribution at the European Community level by the Summit at Viterbe in the same year, a validation later renewed by the Essen Summit (1994) and the Trans-European Transport Network (2004).

- 2 The name “TGV Lyon-Turin” (Lyon-Turin High-Speed Train) was adopted at the outset of the project to reflect the complex nature of the networks and stakeholders involved. The project comprises three segments. The central part is a base tunnel, which will extend for some 57 kilometres, based on the current design. This will be completed by two national sections, from Lyon to Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne in France and from Turin to Bussoleno in Italy. Each segment will have its contracting authority: for access on the French side, the Réseau Ferré de France (RFF), which became SNCF Réseau on January 1 2015, on the Italian side, the *Rete Ferroviaria Italiana* (RFI) and, for the central part, the Lyon Turin Ferroviaria (LTF), which became TELT (Tunnel Euralpin Lyon Turin) in February 2015. The agreement reached in 2012 between France and Italy introduced a second division with a view to operationalising the project from a financial point of view: an international section was identified, extending the part eligible for European co-financing to the Saint-Didier-de-la-Tour/Turin section, which links up a common French-Italian section (Montmélian – Chiusa-San-Michele) and the trans-border section in the strict sense of the term, the base tunnel of Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne – Bussoleno (fig. 1).

Figure 1. The Lyon-Turin rail link: a project comprising multiple sections.

SOURCE: LTF, 2012, ADAPTATIONS K. SUTTON.

- 3 The relative calm surrounding the project in France contrasts sharply with the historic opposition to the project observed in Italy's Susa Valley since 1994 (Sutton, 2013). The “Lyon-Turin” project is often synonymous with the “No TAV” group, an opposition movement in the Susa Valley region that has been able to impose itself as a model for opposition thanks to the spatial extent of its territorial basis (Dansero, Scarpocchi, 2008). Although the slogan “No TAV” has appeared in France, for example with “No TAV Savoie”, the Susa Valley group has its closest ties with the Collectif des Opposants au Lyon Turin (COLT), and its emblematic leader, Daniel Ibanez. The path followed by

French opposition to the project appears to have been profoundly influenced by this man as well as political parties such as Europe Ecologie Les Verts (EELV).

- 4 It would therefore be expedient to examine the paths followed by the diverse elements of the French opposition in order to gain some insights into its spatial characteristics. While the Susa Valley movement has adopted an original method of occupying the threshold area, that is a very intense form of liminality (Fourny, 2013), it would seem that French opposition has developed in a relationship with intermediate spatiality (Merle, 2012). The aim of this article is to compare the paths followed by these protest movements with a view to contributing to a more meaningful reflection on the distinction between “localness” and “proximity”. Analysis of stakeholder strategies and the methods used to spatially express rejection of the project will enable a study of the relationship between these protest movements and “mountain areas” as an entity.

Opposition trajectories: diversity of the protest against Lyon-Turin project in France

The first protests (1991-2012)

- 5 Localised and somewhat limited protests appeared in France from the start of the project in 1991. Three areas of opposition were observed (the suburbs of Lyon, the Lower Dauphiné region, the Avant-Pays Savoyard), which merged together in an association known as “la Coordination Ain Dauphiné Savoie (CADS) in response to the transalpine link projects”. The CADS was set up in Chimilin following the publication of the French national Master Plan for high-speed rail links. This coordination was aimed at bringing together those inhabitants and elected officials who were potentially concerned by the proposed route of the project, which was then only in the first stages of planning. The association was active during the “debate on the economic and social interests of the project” in 1992, a debate conducted jointly for the A 48 Ambérieu-Grenoble autoroute project and the rail project to link Lyon and Montmélián. This first stage revealed the polysemy of the label “TGV Lyon-Turin”, which became used as early as 1991 (Ministère de l’Équipement, des Transports et du Tourisme, 1993; SNCF, 1997). Here, it was only a question of the access line and the consequences in terms of expropriation and the depreciation of land values associated with such a project, and not the overall inter-metropolitan section covered by this term.
- 6 The factual basis of the protest that developed in the Maurienne region around Villarodin-Le Bourget and Modane at the beginning of the 2000s was very different. Opposition here was motivated by physical manifestations in the form of the digging of the Villarodin-Le-Bourget (2002-2007) survey gallery, an exploratory tunnel designed to later be used as an access point to begin excavation from an intermediate location along the base tunnel. This opposition was taken into account by LTF, the contracting authority appointed in October 2001 to conduct preparatory work for tunnel construction. A localized response was observed with the decision to set up a communication space in 2002. It finally opened on October 6, 2005 in the exhibition hall of the Rizerie, in Modane, specially renovated for the occasion. This opening preceded the setting up of the public interest enquiry in the spring of 2006 on the trans-border section (the base tunnel), which became a time of hardening opposition to the project in the municipality of Villarodin-Le Bourget. The municipality’s Internet site provides a

detailed dossier on the question and denounces the fact that work was continued even though the DUP (an official declaration that the project is in the public interest) proclaimed in 2007 and renewed in 2010 could not be applied to the municipality, given that it only considers the old POS (land use plan) and not the PLU (local urban development plan) adopted at the end of 2006. Following a period of mediation by LTF, the conflict now essentially concerns the management of excavated materials, as can be seen from the signs displayed on the walls and roofs of certain houses (fig. 2). The conflict is still with us and constitutes the most deep-seated form of opposition in the Maurienne region, which finds its parallel in the protest movement in Italy.

Figure 2. Sign displaying opposition to the transit and storage of excavated materials at Villarodin-Le Bourget.

SOURCE: INTERNET SITE NO TAV SAVOIE, NOTAV-SAVOIE.OVER-BLOG.COM/, CONSULTED IN AUGUST 2015.

- 7 The announcement of the public enquiry of 2006 coincided with a time when tensions peaked in the Susa Valley. December 2005 saw a brutal confrontation between protesters and police at Venaus (No TAV, 2005). The No TAV group decided to organize a protest in Chambéry on January 7, 2006, but the attempt to reach a wider support base in France did not meet with the success that leaders of the Italian movement had hoped for. This demonstration essentially brought together the No TAV groups of the Susa Valley, militant ecologists and members of far right groups from Chambéry and Lyon. The No TAV movement in Italy has built its strength through its territorial aspects, namely its ability to mobilize citizens for reasons other than political and ideological. This gathering revealed the profound differences in the motivations and organization of opposition to the Lyon-Turin rail link. The “Lyon-Turin” project is bi-national and complex, involving passengers and freight, and underground and open-air sections, but it did not necessarily have any spatial meaning in France in 2006. Villarodin-Le Bourget was opposed to the survey galleries, Avressieux and Chimilin to the “TGV”, and the first French “No TAV” groups to a political system. In fact, the name “Lyon-Turin” was absent from the names of the first French protest groups. The public enquiry on the French access routes, organized in 2012, marked a turning point in this respect.

The turning point of the public interest enquiry of 2012

- 8 The DUP (Declaration of Public Usefulness) renewed in 2010 only concerned the area corresponding to the French part of the worksite of the transborder section. Another ‘public usefulness’ survey was undertaken in 2012 and this provided the context for a reorganization of French opposition to the project, which had so far received little media coverage. The area targeted by the survey included the municipalities located along the proposed route of the new line whose construction was then the responsibility of the RFF. Thus 71 municipalities in the departments of Rhône, Isère and Savoie, between Grenay and Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne (entrance to the planned tunnel) were surveyed between January 16 and March 19, 2012, and the DUP was issued in September of the same year. It was in this technical and electoral context (presidential and legislative elections) that the No TAV Savoie association, bringing together political and trade union groups of the far left, organized a demonstration in Chambéry on 15 March 2012.
- 9 Numerous groups then sprang up along the entire length of the proposed tunnel access route to register their opposition to the project. Chimilin strengthened its historic role as a bastion of opposition with the appearance of the movement “Coordination contre le projet Lyon-Turin voyageurs et fret” (Coordination against the Lyon-Turin passenger and freight project) at the start of April 2012. This new coordinated protest movement brought together a number of different associations (Belledonne Ouest, Non Merci, Vivre Cognin autrement, Coordination Ain Savoie Dauphiné, Association de Défense de l’Environnement à Chimilin, Vivre à Vérel), municipalities (Avressieux and Chimilin) and, at the time, a regional political movement connected with EELV (Mouvement Régional de Savoie). This coordination was opposed to the access line and the tunnels under the Chartreuse and the Belledonne mountains, in other words those entities concerned by the public enquiry. However, the criticisms raised in the context of the justification of the base tunnel found a discursive point of convergence. This convergence weakened the defence of this fundamental part of the project, a part that had been singled out in its treatment by the authorities. Since 2009, the transborder section had been specially supervised under the government’s Demarche Grand Chantier (major worksite) programme, which underlined, for the public authorities, the exceptional nature of the project. Such an approach had not been seen since the building of the Channel tunnel. An observation post was set up to give more body to the approach, the aim of which, according to the LTF internet site, was “to make the most of opportunities for the area by basing development on its resources, and to draw up local development projects that took into account the arrival of a major worksite, while at the same time maintaining stability in the local economy (translation)”.
- 10 This sequence of steps made it more difficult to fully understand what the “Lyon-Turin” project actually involved. The name “Mont Ambin tunnel” was never really accepted, not without it being seen by defenders of the project as a problem in itself. Herein lies a paradox between an acceptance of confusion in naming the tunnel and the desire by the authorities to single out the tunnel in the general process. Singling out the tunnel from an administrative point of view was obviously necessary for its specific legal and technical characteristics to be taken into account, and in particular to ensure its eligibility for allocations of Community funding. But it also made it possible for the project to exist around one key element, the tunnel. However, it was the opponents

who managed to appropriate this effort to make the project more coherent by denouncing the futility of the overall project based on the fact that the tunnel itself (without access routes) was denounced as being pointless. The tunnel proponents began discussion on its name in 2014, and the name "Tunnel Euralpin" was adopted in 2015. The "Lyon-Turin" name, on the other hand, has been used on the opponents' Internet site since 2014 (lyonturin.eu).

The rise of a personality: Daniel Ibanez

- 11 Since discussion and debate begun on the proposed Lyon-Turin rail link, a personality has emerged who today embodies the protest movement, both for the media and the project's sponsor: Daniel Ibanez. The rise of Ibanez has enabled opponents of the Lyon-Turin project to become more coherent and consistent in their arguments. It also reflects a decentralizing trend that has shifted project opposition towards the Northern Grésivaudan Valley, to the municipalities of Chapareillan and Les Mollettes. These municipalities have provided the base for the development of their own protest movement, the Collectif de Chapareillan contre le Lyon-Turin (CCLT), which, through different mutations, has imposed itself as a mobilizing force and federating agent for the Coordination des Opposants au Lyon-Turin (COLT), a group that appeared in 2010. This spatial shift has been accompanied by a reworking of the arguments used and of the protest targets. The work of Ibanez has gone beyond the NIMBY type of argument underpinning earlier motivations, but has taken care not to fall into the trap of protesting against the system, as was the case of the "No TAV Savoie" movement.
- 12 The line of argument adopted is based on legal, economic, and financial considerations. It takes up certain paradigms of the Susa Valley No TAV group, such as the principle of responsibility, but the method is different. It is not a question of promoting an alternative territorial model, but of constructing a critical analysis of the elements put forward to justify the base tunnel, particularly the traffic forecasts and the models used to calculate the economic benefits in the areas concerned. This critical appraisal of the tunnel's *raison d'être* thus made it possible to call into question the foundations of the justification for constructing the new access lines. The rhetoric is aimed at requesting a deferral of the investments approved for a project considered pointless in favour of more local developments to meet daily travel needs, such as doubling the track on the Annecy - Aix-les-Bains line. It is not a question of opposing the alpine crossing during discussions, but rather of encouraging an optimization of existing lines. Once again, the topics brought up in discussions by the Italian protesters are tangible, but Ibanez reaches this point by rigorous reasoning on the weaknesses of the French argument, an argument that was still being used in 2013 and has not been renewed for more than 15 years. This suggests the need for a new structure since the existing one will soon be saturated. Dominique Dord, MP for the Savoie foreland area and Aix-les-Bains, considered that this position was no longer relevant in 2013 and withdrew his support for the base tunnel project because of inadequate justification (Dord, 2013).
- 13 The strength of Ibanez's position has come from his ability to integrate technical aspects and localized concerns by exploiting historical themes of opposition, such as the environment or landscape preservation. In this respect it follows on from internal debates in the EELV concerning the group's position in relation to the Lyon-Turin project, which for a long time was not unanimous. Health has become a powerful

argument in the judicialisation of the conflict against project proponents. Thus, NIMBY-type positions, such as the refusal of expropriation, have been able to find a higher justification, that of public usefulness. Usefulness, more than responsibility, has been the banner of French opposition since 2012. The theme of responsibility in Italy echoes the claim for local territorial legitimacy put forward in response to the denial from the (il)legitimate authorities. The usefulness theme, in France, is the expression of the recognition of the legitimacy of administrative bodies, namely the Court of Auditors whose reports have been used on numerous occasions. Denunciation concerns the political choices that have been made, at national and municipal levels. The personal political commitment of Ibanez may thus be seen as an expression of the recognition of the validity of public participation, whereas, in Italy, participation of the No TAV group in the "Mouvement 5 étoiles" (5 star movement) involves denouncing the system. In effect, Ibanez was a candidate on the EELV lists for the European and regional elections, respectively in 2014 and 2015. The utility or usefulness theme, or more specifically the denunciation of the pointlessness of the project, is strong, and constitutes the central tenet of his book (Ibanez, 2014), which is becoming a powerful lever for the diffusion of the arguments underpinning protest and opposition to the base tunnel at the national level.

- 14 Opponents thus have a stronger hold on the media than the LTF. The entry of the Coordination into the network of the Grands Projets Inutiles et Imposés (Imposed and Pointless Major Projects) connected French opposition to the Lyon-Turin project with other opposition groups in France, including that opposing the airport of Notre-Dame-des-Landes. Entry into this network was facilitated by the notoriety of the conflict in the Susa Valley, which hosted the first forum of this network of opponents in 2011. But above all it enabled the strengthening of the national basis of opposition in France, which capitalized on the media coverage of the protest against the airport project.

National differences and similarities: 'localness' versus proximity

Attempts at encouraging convergence of opinions: an alpine transborder opposition?

- 15 French and Italian protest movements have different origins. The alternative territoriality promoted by the No TAV movement is not transposable, although it constitutes its strength and distinctiveness. The difficulty in bridging the gap between the French and Italian protest movements is real, as Ibanez has duly recognized (2014 pp 87-103). Practical and ongoing dialogue between the French and Italian camps has not been extended, however, to the groups supporting the No TAV movement on the French side of the border. These groups, which are mainly urban, play the role of diffusion centres for opposition, but do not really constitute cores for the construction of protest arguments. It was the COLT that was invited by the Susa Valley group, as early as the summer of 2012, as the representative for the French protest movement. There was a lot at stake for the Italian group, namely working to achieve compatibility and even a convergence of rhetoric. Several meetings followed that of 4 August, 2012, organized in the Susa Valley. The most important from a media coverage viewpoint was the Pre-Summit organized in Lyon on 30 November and 1 December, 2012 alongside the

official Franco-Italian summit which saw the project strengthened by the national executives and thus enter into a phase of acceleration in the decisional timetable of the European Community. This meeting sought a convergence of opinions that would be seen as indicative of a transborder protest movement, the implications of which could not strictly speaking be considered "alpine". It is not really a question of the 'Alps', or of a possible alpine society, but of institutional Europe and its democratic operation. This convergence has taken place in European political space and is not part of an attempt to assert alpine territoriality. It is a question of going beyond the foundations of the No TAV movement, a movement that claims a right to 'alpineness', illustrated by constant references to the valley.

- 16 In some ways, the protest is trying to succeed where the proponents of the project had failed up until 2015, that is in harmonising the schedules between the different segments and in making the Lyon-Turin segment a unique project space. This convergence examines the notion of liminality, because it is both a question of subverting the norm (Bhabha, 1994) and of 'inhabiting' the limit (Fourny, 2013). This limit is not so much the political boundary as the superimposition of the different stakeholder segments comprising the project that make relations during discussions more complex. The path followed by the Lyon-Turin project may be seen as three timeframes that need to be woven into the same calendar. This convergence is the essence of the challenge that has faced the national States, Europe and LTF since 2012, a challenge that is well on the way to being met within the framework of the coordination of national and European funding (Région Rhône-Alpes, 2014). In this respect, the path followed by the protest movement acts as a social selling point that gives the project a parallel spatial existence. It is not a question of territory here, but rather of space. The Lyon-Turin project is becoming a political space in the process of consolidation, by virtue of the conflict surrounding it (Laslaz, 2005), which has also made it necessary to reach institutional agreement, and this is now well under way. This project has for a long time suffered from a lack of visibility, even with regard to its name (Besson, 2012). It is like a sort of chronicle of never-ending false starts. Politicians have on numerous occasions been happy to announce the beginning of the Lyon-Turin project, so much so that this beginning has never really happened, despite the work of the Franco-Italian Intergovernmental Conference and the test run of the European project at the scale of the corridor. Protest, through its transformation into structured opposition, marks the expected beginning of consideration by society or the social sphere. It is indeed a paradoxical validation of the project.
- 17 It is thus important to distinguish between protest and opposition. Protest is understood here to mean a contradictory argumentative stance, but also one of contradiction, and is an associative or citizens' response. Opposition calls for a more structured organization of this movement and the capacity to plan for action over a longer time period in the form of an environmental type conflict (Laslaz, 2014). The position is therefore one of accusation, and is part of a commitment with militant and political tendencies. This change expresses another form of liminality, which is clearly evident in the book by Ibanez, as well as in the tracts distributed at the Chambéry market between 2012 and 2015. Arguments presented on A4-format sheets were replaced by A5 formats of the flyer type, calling into question the injustice of the treatment of the opposition and the decisions taken by the authorities with respect to the Lyon-Turin dossier.

Distinguishing different territorialities

- 18 Denunciation of the project has become the stance that has enabled an apparent convergence between the French and Italian protest movements. However, the arguments presented are based on considerations that are too specifically national to allow really fundamental convergence. Nevertheless, Ibanez presents this diversity as a strength of the movement, which he speaks about in the singular (Ibanez, 2014, p. 101). The author recognizes that 'each party keeps its identity', which is reflected in the spatial aspects of the opposition. The absence of alpine references on the French side can be explained by the history of a protest that originated essentially in the peri-urban areas. Here, as Merle (2012) has observed, one can find a complex of intermediate spatiality with respect to the Avant-Pays savoyard. Both Chimilin and Chapareillan are situated in an in-between area whose identity is not associated with the mountains, but more with rural and agricultural dimensions. In the Susa Valley, these three aspects blend into a single valley identity, with an alpine mountain reference. On the Italian side of the border, the landscape argument of the protest refers more to living with an idea of the mountains, while on the French side it is more a question of land values. Visual manifestation of opposition to the project is limited to a few municipalities such as Chapareillan, Les Mollettes, Saint-Hélène-du-Lac and Laissaud, that is those municipalities directly concerned by the proposed access route to the tunnel. It is a similar situation for the Avant-Pays savoyard and Nord-Dauphiné areas for the municipalities of Avressieux and Chimilin. Visual evidence of this protest extends as far as the bridges on the A43 autoroute, but only in the immediate vicinity of these two municipalities (fig. 3).

Figure 3. Graphic displays of opposition to the Lyon-Turin project in the Avant-Pays Savoyard

- 19 While the alternative character of the Susa Valley movement is the actual expression of a liminal territoriality, the spatial framework that provided the birthplace of the French opposition is more a reflection of intermediate spatiality. Consequently, there is not the same spatial fecundity in the local reach of the movement. However, it is not a question of a degradation of the Susa Valley protest model. The French protest

becomes opposition through a *modus operandi* that responds to a spatiality whose metric relates to proximity and not 'localness' (Paquier, 2011). Here, proximity refers to a profoundly reticular metric which structures a hybrid close space based on a selective organization of spatial distances. Places become 'spots', each of which provide anchorage points for the diffusion of spatiality, which thus "sprouts roots" (Bernier, 2014). We come back to the idea that "proximity is an area that is expanding (translation)" (Lévy, Lussault, 2013 p. 821). The perfect example of this type of anchorage point is the bookshop. A boost to the diffusion of the arguments put forward by Ibanez was the publication and diffusion of his book. On this occasion, he was invited to present and discuss his arguments in different bookshops (fig. 4). From here, diffusion of his discourse took place by a type of capillary action. This accompanied the change in stance already mentioned. In some respects, his book fixed the line of argument put forward at the end of 2014, in other words before the changes that affected the project in 2015.

Figure 4. Campaign to promote the book *Trafics en tous genres* by author Daniel Ibanez: expansion of the space of public debate in the construction of a spatiality of proximity

K. SUTTON, 2015.

Figure 5. Graphic produced by the Susa Valley No TAV group: construction of a local space by the ‘staging’ of the valley

SOURCE: WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/NO-TAV-40019706447/ CONSULTED IN DECEMBER 2009.

- 20 The spatial form produced by Ibanez’s trips to promote and encourage discussion about his book (fig. 4) has nothing in common with that produced by the No TAV movement in the Susa Valley (fig. 5). The valley is the sign of protest erected as a ‘geographic symbol’. This spatiality owes its existence to what is local, understood here to mean the search to increase the territorial value of the relationship with place. Nevertheless we are concerned with a relational space, illustrating the *chôra* rather than the *topos* (Volvey, 2007). Using a place name does not position, it ‘places’ (Lussault, 2013). It is the basis for the recognition of the existence of local everyday life, which is more important than general planning. The common nature of this space relates to the recognition of the valley as the basic unit of spatial relations. General interest can then only lie in the common interest, thus affirming the existence of a local community that is legitimate to deal with future territorial issues. This echoes the observations of Fourny (2013 p. 8) concerning the relationship between identity and liminality: “The formulation of what is common is linked to action: it is not essentialist in nature, but instead political, depending on the spatial challenges and the added value of a collective approach (translation)”. It is not at all the same in France, where the opposition seeks, in the support of national political parties like the EELV, a public resonance that has no ‘common’ impact in the conflict.

Conclusion. The touchstone of graphic identity

- 21 The expression of these different spatial characteristics can be found through the graphic identity of the two movements. The Susa Valley movement has paid particular attention to this fundamental dimension in the conflict right from the beginning of the 2000s. The graphic identity of the French opposition was for a long time virtually non-existent, at best merely adopting the appearances of the Italian group. It was not until 2012 that the group adopted a logo with strong links to the Susa Valley movement and took up the slogan of the No TAV groups, “neither here, nor anywhere”. These changes

rapidly resulted in the appearance of a graphic identity whose specificity is based on the theme of utility (fig. 6).

Figure 6. Federating logo of French protesters: a search for graphic identity

SOURCE: LYONTURIN.EU CONSULTED IN AUGUST 2015.

- 22 The logo uses a graphic design that identifies it immediately as a protest against the "Lyon-Turin" project within the landscape of opposition groups in Europe: the picture of a train crossed out, which was the original signature of the "No TAV" movement. The term "No TAV" does not appear, since these are not the same groups. However, "Lyon-Turin" does appear with the word 'non' cleverly written using the letter "N" and the "€" symbol written backwards. This symbol designates the "O" and also identifies the entrance to the tunnel, denouncing it as a financial hole. This denunciation is also accompanied by the mention of the group's adhesion to the GPII network. The logo is dominated by the principle of usefulness, given that it determines the originality of the position adopted by this major section of French opposition. There is no desire to assert any particular alternative societal character, just the desire for institutional recognition and participation in the public debate. This opposition is not therefore a matrix for the production of common space, but simply an actor in the public arena (Bernier, 2014), whose validity is based on effective recognition by the public authorities. The absence of territoriality and a specific way of behaving is therefore only an expression of this, even if events such as the march organized in July 2015 "from Chimilin to the Susa Valley" attempt to construct a local dimension, together with the gathering at Chapareillan on June 14 of the same year. The methods of opposition to the proposed Lyon-Turin rail link in France are not fixed and will continue to evolve very rapidly.

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ABSTRACTS

Public interest enquiries conducted in relation to the proposed Lyon-Turin rail link have revealed the development of a composite protest to the project in France, particularly in 2012. Different associations have emerged, along with a personality, Daniel Ibanez, which have provided this protest movement with both a face and greater coherence in its opposition to the project. A somewhat argumentative stance in 2012-2013 has progressively given way to one that has more clearly denounced the project since 2014, a change indicating a form of liminality in the expression of conflict. The foundations of this opposition in France remain distinct from those in the Susa Valley, the historic area of opposition to the project in Italy. The principle of usefulness is foremost in France while, historically, the principle of responsibility has been the driving force in Italy. This article examines the paths of the different players making up French opposition to the project by analyzing the discourse and political underpinnings of the protagonists. The study's comparative approach seeks to gain insights into the spatialities of the opposition movements in France and the Susa Valley. The article thus hopes to contribute to a more meaningful reflection on the distinction between “localness” and “proximity” by studying the relationship between protest movements and “mountain areas” as an entity in the process of the social construction of a line of argument.

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Keywords: Lyon-Turin, protest, liminality, intermediate space

TRADUCTEUR_DESCRIPTION

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