



AU NOM DE LA SECURITE : PROCESSUS D'INDIVIDUALISATION DU RISQUE POUR UN NOUVEL « ORGANIZING » (MODE D'ORGANISATION)

IN THE NAME OF SAFETY: PROCESS OF RISK INDIVIDUALIZATION FOR NEW ORGANIZING

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1 **RESUMÉ:** À l'ère du changement climatique et de l'augmentation de la fréquence et de l'ampleur des catastrophes naturelles, il existe
2 une attente croissante et pressante envers les autorités publiques pour garantir la sécurité des personnes. Les risques sociétaux complexes sont
3 transférés à un niveau plus gérable grâce au processus d'individualisation. Dans cet article, nous examinons le processus d'individualisation
4 en tant que processus de traduction du risque dans le contexte environnemental risqué qu'est la montagne. Nous identifions qu'un tel processus
5 d'individualisation repose sur deux dynamiques que nous qualifions de « délictualisation » et de « responsabilisation » pour refléter leur
6 logique sous-jacente concurrente bien qu'elles visent le même objectif. Nos résultats permettent de construire un cadre théorique
7 d'individualisation des risques décryptant ce processus et en mettant en lumière de nouvelles formes d'organisation des risques.

8 **Mots clés :** organization du risque, individualisation du risque, processus de traduction, études processuelles.

9
10 **ABSTRACT:** In an era of climate change and increased natural disasters both in frequency and magnitude, there is a growing and pressing
11 expectation that public authorities to ensure people's safety. Complex societal risk are transferred to more manageable level through the
12 process of individualization. In this paper, we examine the process of individualization as a process of translation of risk in the risky ecological
13 context of the mountains. We identify that such an individualization process relies on two dynamics that we label 'turning into tort' and
14 'responsibilizing' to reflect their competing underlying logic despite aiming to achieve the same purpose. Our findings allow to build a
15 theoretical framework of risk individualization unpacking this process and shedding light on new form of risk organizing.

16 **Keywords:** risk organizing, individualization of risk, translation process, process studies.

17 18 I. INTRODUCTION

19 The combined influence of late modernity, whereby industrial progress and the exponential use of technologies produce new
20 risks (Beck, 1992), and of New Public Management, whereby expectations of performance, efficiency and accountability are
21 introduced in public management (Hood, 1991), risks have become a new drive in organizing for society at large. In an era of
22 climate change and increased natural disasters both in frequency and magnitude, there is a growing and pressing expectation
23 that public authorities fulfil their moral and legal duty to ensure people's safety and face risks - the potential occurrence of an
24 extreme adverse event (Gephart et al., 2009). However, collective social structures are no longer adequate to deal with the

25 proliferation of novel risks, and multiple and heterogeneous actors (individuals, organizations, and public authorities) need to
26 partake and organize in ways to handle risks (Beck, 1992; Howard, 2008). Therefore, public authorities and governments
27 become the key actors in enacting the transfer from collective societal risks into more manageable ones through a process of
28 ‘individualization’ (Hardy & Maguire, 2016), whereby “*new demands, controls and constraints are being imposed on*
29 *individuals*” (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2011, p. 4).

30
31 Embracing the need for actors to normalize and individualize risks— in daily practices, scholars in Organization and
32 Management Theory (OMT) developed dedicated streams of literature to extreme contexts and risk organizing (Hällgren et
33 al., 2018; Hardy & Maguire, 2016). Based on the socially constructed view of risk (Power, 2007; Renn, 2008, Slovic), the
34 risk and related risk objects (Hilgartner, 1992) can be framed differently from one group to another and its perception relies
35 on the interaction of personal and collective reasoning, experience and communication (Maguire & Hardy, 2013; Hardy &
36 Maguire, 2020). Interestingly, in the vein that risk society stems from industrialization and risks generated by organizations
37 most research about organizing risks focused on industrial settings such as pharmaceutical and chemical industry (Hardy &
38 Maguire, 2020; Maguire & Hardy, 2009, 2013), nuclear powerplants (Carroll et al., 2006; Hamer et al., 2021) , and oil
39 drilling (Cowley et al., 2021; Topal, 2009)., etc. By exploring how risks objects are constructed (Hilgartner, 1992) -
40 collectively defined and how their meaning negotiated through discourse - those studies shed light on ‘translation’ as a
41 process of moving societal risks into organizational ones. Translation implies that ideas and concepts ‘travel’ through images,
42 discuss, symbols to be at the end turned into actions (Czarniawska, 2012; Lawrence, 2017).

43
44 However, it is not clear today how each actor contributes to a collective risk perception and how this negotiated and
45 renegotiated risk perception influences the ability to manage risk (Maguire & Hardy, 2013). Despite growing interest on risk
46 individualization, empirical research within OMT is missing (Dawson, 2012, Hardy et al., 2020). Moreover, how such
47 translation is ultimately implemented and how it becomes new constraints, demands or controls for individuals still remains
48 to be explored. Therefore, in this article **we explore how public actors construct risk objects from their ecological**
49 **environment and how they enact and implement an individualization process by which they delegate part of the risk**
50 **management to individuals**. Specifically, we try to understand how risk translates from public actors to individuals, which
51 implies transferring the governance of risk as well as reframing the perimeter and sometimes the nature of risk (Czarniawska
52 & Joerges, 1996; Hardy et al., 2020).

53
54 Moving beyond the social construction of risk and the traditional industrial organizational settings, we explore
55 individualization as a process of translation of risk of an extreme ecological contexts. Risks stemming from ecological
56 contexts, by their global and complex nature, could not be handled by a particular organization and requires collective
57 response. . We conduct a single case study (Stake, 1995) about the enactment of individualization of risk practices in one of
58 the major European Mountain Climbing sites. We collect and analyze and triangulate data from different sources: newspaper
59 articles, press releases, and legal texts between 2017 and 2023 dedicated to mountaineering, direct observation and
60 exploratory interviews with local public authorities. We examine the full translation process from the social construction of
61 risk objects until its ultimate implementation whereby local public authorities simultaneously translate and transfer the
62 responsibility to manage risks from them to individuals (mountaineers and climbers).

63
64 We identify two dynamics in the individualization process (‘turning into tort’ and ‘responsibilizing’) that public actors
65 develop to transfer risks to individual climbers. We also shed light on the implementation stage of the individualization
66 process by offering a theoretical framework of risk individualization. Our contributions are threefold. First, we shed light on
67 the challenges of constructing the risk object in a multi-organizational setting by highlighting complex dynamics between
68 public actors and individuals. Second, we extend the discursive approach of risk organizing studies by developing a process
69 model of the individualization process. We highlight that constructing the risk object not only reframes the nature of risk but
70 also segments the population to which management of the new risk will be transferred. Third, we argue that such a translation
71 process shapes a new and durable form of risk organizing. Our findings may help guide policymakers through risk organizing
72 processes in extreme ecological contexts.

73

74

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

75

A. Individualization: importance of risk emplacement

76 In risk society, individualization is the process by which society can function as collective structures and organizations are no
77 longer adequate to handle and manage the emerging novel risks (Beck, 1992; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2011; Burgess,
78 2018). Therefore, individuals become the fundamental and focal unit of societies by which social and societal models are
79 produced and reproduced. Grounded in modernist assumptions, such a process whereby risk management is transferred from
80 collective organizing to individuals surmises that people have the sufficient and relevant knowledge, education, the
81 autonomy, and the freedom to assume such risks and their consequences (Howard, 2008; Miller, 2009). The process of
82 individualization attracts the attention of OMT - studies tend to show that individualization implies that actors actually argue
83 for their particular interests to be acknowledged and considered (Malenfant, 2009, Dawson, 2012). For example, Malenfant

84 (2009) stresses how it is difficult for employers and employees to negotiate a satisfactory common ground when dealing with
85 pregnancy and its risks at work. While individualization has been the focus of many theoretical concerns in sociology,
86 empirical research is missing (Dawson, 2012). In addition, despite growing attention from OMT scholars (particularly in the
87 context of the recent covid-19 pandemic (Kuhlmann et al., 2021; Sharma et al., 2021) individualization remains of marginal
88 exploration in organisation and management theory (Hardy et al., 2020).

89 Such a perspective draws attention to the social construction of risk that depends on perceptions, interactions of group
90 reasoning, personal experience, social communication and cultural traditions (e.g. Pidgeon, 1991; Renn & Walker, 2008).
91 Therefore, risk can be framed differently from one group to another since the interpretations of a same phenomenon are
92 situated in ‘practice-based social contexts’ shining what people value – both in terms of morals and what is considered to be
93 worth – and believe (Boholm & Corvellec, 2011). Then, conceptions of risk may be considered as a “*game in which the rules*
94 *must be socially negotiated within the context of a specific problem*” where conflictual characterizations may occur (Slovic,
95 2001, p. 19).

96
97 In such a relational perspective on risk, Hilgartner (1992, p. 40) suggests that risk is encapsulated in tangible or intangible
98 ‘risk objects’ that are socially constructed by connecting “*at least three conceptual elements: an object deemed to pose the*
99 *risk, a putative harm, and a linkage alleging some form of causation between the object and the harm*”. Such a construction
100 consists either in ‘emplacement,’ i.e., by successfully defining the object and the causal relationship so that it becomes
101 significant enough to be reckoned as such, or ‘displacement,’ the opposite of emplacement where the significance and the
102 causal relationship to risk is removed from the object. By socially constructing and defining risks objects, actors – mainly
103 public authorities in governmentality literature – individualize risks by shifting the locus of responsibility and by categorizing
104 individuals (Hardy & Maguire, 2016).

105
106 Recent research in OMT provide illustration of how risk is individualized through ‘emplacement’ (Hardy & Maguire, 2020;
107 Maguire & Hardy, 2013). Echoing the importance of texts and rhetoric (Boholm & Corvellec, 2011; Hilgartner, 1992), these
108 studies examine how different stakeholders discursively negotiate and renegotiate the meaning of objects of risk – chemicals
109 potentially posing vital threats to human health – as ‘risk objects’ and how public authorities deemed them risky (toxic) or
110 safe. They highlight that such processes can be conflictual as the different group actors feel threatened by the very process of
111 construction of the risk object, like the dispute between scientists regarding their expertise and professionalism. The authors
112 also emphasize how the attribution of meaning of risk or safety supports and legitimizes collective action and legal measures
113 to be taken for the sake of public health. While the role of experts and public authorities are put on the forefront, it is not clear
114 today how each collective actor contributes to a collective risk perception and how this negotiated and renegotiated risk
115 perception influences the ability to manage risk (Maguire & Hardy, 2013). Moreover, the focus on the discursive practices
116 and sheds light on the actors’ sensemaking processes and the negotiation of meanings about the risk object, hence obscuring
117 the implementation stage of the process. Indeed, how individualization of risks cascades down to individuals in terms of
118 constraints, control and demands remains to be explored.

120 *B. Translation: materialization of risk in discourse and practices*

121 Recent research in OMT suggest that ‘risk translation’ is a powerful framework to understand and explain the dynamics at
122 play in the individualization process (Hardy et al., 2020; Hardy & Maguire, 2020). Such a risk translation process implies the
123 presence of an object of risk opened to different interpretations and whose meaning is both transformed in relation to risk –
124 namely changed – and simultaneously moved – namely displaced across geographical, social or political boundaries thanks to
125 the creation of new connections that did not exist before from one domain to another or from one actor to another (Brown,
126 2002; Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996; Latour, 1986; Lawrence, 2017).

127
128 According about the literature about translation, for the process to be effective, ideas need to ‘travel’, that is to be
129 materialized in tangible and intangible objects - images, symbols, sounds - to be turned into action (Czarniawska, 2012;
130 Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996; Nielsen et al., 2022; Piekkari et al., 2020). It is argued that this very materialization produces
131 change as practices are transformed and they trigger a course of action that will enact the translation (Czarniawska & Joerges,
132 1996). By approaching translation as both an interlingual – translation across natural languages – and metaphorical –
133 translation of practices across organizational contexts – process, Piekkari et al. (2020, p. 1315) emphasize the importance of
134 the notion of *skopos* – defined as the “*intended purpose of the commissioner of the translation*” – hence underlying role of
135 local actors as being ‘editors’ whose purpose may play an agentic role in the process. The authors differentiate the degree of
136 emphasis on the linguistic or the metaphorical dimension of the process. This allows them to distinguish four ideal types of
137 translation: automated translation (highly interlingual, lowly metaphorical), borrowing (lowly interlingual, highly
138 metaphorical), parallel practice (lowly metaphorical, lowly interlingual), and agentic translation (highly metaphorical, highly
139 interlingual). In their empirical illustrations of the latter, the authors highlight the deliberate distance, by omitting or
140 deviating, from the initial context and *skopos* in the translation process. Doing so, the translator inflects the trajectory of
141 events in a way that they think would facilitate a positive reception of the translation by the recipients.

142
143 Such claims are illustrated in Lawrence (2017) with the physical places of self-injection sites or Hardy & Maguire (2020) by
144 the increased number of scientific studies funded by manufacturers, or the production of final reports from the public

145 agencies. The same applies in the covid-19 period with the certificates from employers or self-signed that allowed people to
146 break the lockdown for one hour in France (Kuhlmann et al., 2021) or the messages relayed by the media regarding the safety
147 measures that populations should adopt (Sharma et al. 2021). Czarniawska (2012) emphasizes that the object of risk being
148 mythologised by ‘dramatization’ is an important step to finalize the translation of ideas into action. Similarly, Lawrence
149 (2017) shows how much emotions participate in both resisting and adopting the import process. However, how such
150 ‘dramatization’ occurs and influences the individualization and how such a process is operationalized remains to be explored.
151 To summarize, individualization of risk has become the norm in risk society (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2011; Burgess,
152 2018). It relies on a social construction of risk objects, which implies negotiations and renegotiations of meanings regarding
153 an object of risk that needs to be deemed harmful, which naturally calls for the necessity to organise risks and manage safety
154 (Boholm & Corvellec, 2011; Hardy et al. 2020). Recent studies tend to emphasize that translation processes is a relevant
155 approach to understand how practices are both changed and moved across contexts to inflect trajectories and set up a novel
156 course of action (Nielsen et al., 2022; Piekkari et al., 2020). However, it is still unclear how the construction of risk objects
157 connects with such a process and supports its unfolding and actual implementation onto individuals. In this article, we
158 explore how public actors construct risk objects related to their legal duty to organize risks from their ecological environment
159 and ‘use’ such framings to enact and implement an individualization process by which they delegate part of the risk
160 management to individuals.

161 III. METHODOLOGY

162 A. *The mountains: space of liberty and of risks to be organized*

163 Since the first ascent of the Mont-Blanc in 1786, mountaineering developed as a sport around the world. It has the symbol of
164 personal achievement and of the ultimate space of freedom as mountaineers are alone, with their and sole equipment,
165 embedded in a vast place that is not constrained in any form. As a consequence, European summits (close to 4,000 meters in
166 altitude) have been attracting a lot of climbers over the years. Moreover, the development of tourism since the 1980s and the
167 commercialisation of risks through the installation of many lifts and sensational activities bring more and more inexperienced
168 and unknowledgeable people to high altitudes. In combination with these long-term trends, climate change, the increased
169 frequency of heat waves, and covid-19 have also been driving more and more people from the general population to the
170 mountains, where altitude is supposed to bring coolness and fresh air. While bringing new income through the sale of tickets
171 and supporting local employment directly and indirectly thanks to the creation of shops and hotels, this exponential influx of
172 people in the area also generates risks that public actors need to consider.

173
174 Since 1982, France is experiencing a “decentralization” process by which the state delegates responsibilities to Regions,
175 Departments and municipalities to give them autonomy and responsibility. Local public actors design their own budget and
176 handle social support funds. They make their own decisions regarding the creation of touristic equipment and facilities,
177 among others. In terms of safety and police regulations, municipalities are responsible for ensuring safety in their area,
178 specifically where the environment has obviously been modified to support human activities. It implies that mayors and
179 municipalities can take any legal and material measures they deem necessary to protect individuals and the environment from
180 any accident or natural disasters. When it comes to rescue activities, it falls under the municipality responsibility if an
181 accident occurs in a ski resort. In case an accident happens in the mountain, rescue activity is the responsibility of the state
182 through the Prefect who is embodying the state locally. This distinction between equipped places and mountain wilderness
183 creates ambiguity regarding the legal duty to ensure safety in the whole territory. From this collision raises the
184 individualization process by which partial safety concerns are transferred to individuals should they be hikers, trailers,
185 climbers, alpinists, or mountain guides.

186
187 In Hardy’s and Maguire’s (2020, p. 700) terms, the presence of human beings in the mountains is in itself an ‘object of risk’
188 as they might pose a risk. Mountains are inherently risky because of the quick swifts in meteorological conditions, the high
189 variation of temperature between nights and days, but also for the cliffs, the glaciers, the rockfalls and of seracs.
190 Consequently, people (hickers, climbers and mountaineers) can be constructed as bearers of risks of pollution of the
191 ecological environment, of risks accidents that would cost money for the tax payer, or any other risk. This paper focuses on
192 how public authorities, specifically municipalities in the area actually (Municipality A and Municipality B) framed and
193 constructed this object of risk in risk objects (Hilgartner, 1992), and how this first step in the translation process cascades
194 down onto individuals in the form of new constraints, demands, or control in any.

196 B. *Data collection*

197 In this paper, we focus on an attractive and famous climbing and mountaineering area in France, that we will call ‘Mountain
198 Place’. Thorough data collection was prompted by the call for paper for a conference, following a latent watch on what
199 happens in the area in terms of mountaineering and rescue activities. We focused on online publications such as newspapers,
200 magazines dedicated to mountaineering and press releases specifically dealing with the individualization process. Our
201 collection is still ongoing creating a Google alert with “Mountain Place” being the keyword. So far, we collected 188
202 publications and 4 official decrees issued by the Prefecture which is the local representation of the state ranging principally
203 from 2017 to 2023. Focusing on such secondary data is deliberate to capture ‘official’ discourse that would reveal the reasons

204 and arguments actors use to support the process of individualization of risk. We paid particular attention on getting articles
205 voicing public actors' competing point of views.
206 To triangulate our sources, we attended a meeting that was held on May 30th and 31st 2023. During those two days,
207 professionals working in the mountains (guides, hut guards, rescuers, federation of amateur mountaineers) gathered and work
208 in thematic roundtables about challenges and practices raised by climate change and the conflictual decisions taken in 2022.
209 We took 49 pages of hand fieldnotes that we will transcribe and translate since the meeting was held in French. While we
210 were there, we got in touch with people that accepted to be interviewed. Semi-structured interviews are currently being held
211 (we conducted three interviews of 45 minutes on average) and will unfold after the summer season using a snowball sampling
212 technique (Miles & Huberman, 2003).
213

214 C. Data analysis

215 Our purpose it to understand the dynamics of the individualization process and its underlying mechanisms. The data analysis
216 is still ongoing and it is occurring in different phases. In the first phase, we categorized the articles, decrees and our field
217 notes in chronologic order, from 2017 to 2023. This illuminated that both municipalities decided to share their risk
218 management legal duty with practitioners. However, our data were giving a blurry picture since some articles seemed to
219 contradict one another. Therefore, we separated them according to their coherence and consistence with one another. This
220 first round of thematic analysis illuminated that the individualization process was achieved through two different and
221 apparently antagonistic dynamics.
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223 In the second phase we delved into the articles to understand how actors framed their discourse and the operationalised the
224 individualization dynamics. We coded inductively according to emerging themes. Throughout this second step, we went back
225 and forth from data to literature about risk translation (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996; Hardy et al., 2020) and we identified
226 two main mechanisms by which actors reframe risk: *dramatizing and blaming*, and *heroizing freedom*. We also identified two
227 mechanisms by which they actualize the translation process to individuals: *instrumentalizing* and *coordinating*. The big
228 picture we designed enabled us to label the dynamics that we initially separated during the first step of our analysis.
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231 IV. FINDINGS

232 This findings section details how municipalities fulfil their legal duty to ensure safety in their area in the context of tensions
233 between safety and freedom. Interestingly, our data show that in the face of this common obligation, they partially translate
234 this responsibility to individuals. However, they proceed in ways embedded in two different dynamics that have been
235 developing for almost ten years. While we separate them for theoretical purposes, those dynamics are intertwined with one
236 another, like "*the yin and the yang of the Mountain Place*" (Le Dauphiné Libéré, 2011), since actors belong to the same area
237 and have similar concerns of preservation of the setting. For each dynamic, we will describe how the nature of risk is
238 transformed to be transferred to individuals and what tools are mobilised to enact/enforce the translation. Finally, we will
239 analyse how those two dynamics converge or not to provide an efficient/suitable solution for the area.
240

241 A. Dynamic 1: Turning safety into tort [delictualising?]

242 The first dynamic is led by Municipality B that is the starting point for most of the 20,000 climbs per year (the normal route).
243 Its stated aim is to restrict and regulate access to the Mountain Place and the ascents to the summit. It relies both on
244 *dramatizing and blaming* to exaggerate the severity of past accidents and behaviours and *instrumentalising* the legal tools and
245 connections with actors.
246

247 ***Dramatising and blaming*** consists of using accidents or incidents that happened in the past to emphasize and exaggerate the
248 risks while pointing the finger at climbers and trailer, hence emphasising individual responsibility in those events. Mountain
249 rescue operations are frequent during summer, up to twenty a day may occur during summer. This frequency more than the
250 severity of the incident is pointed out, "*today a new human drama on the royal road of the Mountain Place, when a 46-year-*
251 *old man needed to attempt conquering the summit of Western Europe... with just the usual trailing equipment*" (Press
252 Release, 2017). The small number of deadly accidents may also be turned into emotional statements "*even if last year there*
253 *were only fifteen deaths, it's fifteen deaths too many. [...] We can't continue to have a race started by anyone under any*
254 *conditions, in defiance of the life of mountaineers [...] and the life of the rescuers*" (France Info, 2018). Even the tiniest
255 incidents are embroidered. Referring to people who wanted to ascend in shorts and sneakers, the municipality claims "*they*
256 *wanted to climb with "death in the backpack"*" (Press Release, 2022).
257

258 One purpose of this exaggeration is to point out dangerous behaviours and blame climbers. Primary targets are climbers and
259 trailers who are called "scums", "hotheads" or "pseudo-alpinists" who do not respect the rules, "*This summer again, these*
260 *'hooligans' have raged. Among the most notable stories, a man tried to climb the Mountain Place with his pitbull – a*
261 *category 1 dog – without a muzzle. But the animal, by deviating from the path caused stones to fall on high-mountain guides*"

262 (Caron, 2020). The responsibility of professionals is also questioned by accusing them to be too focused on their business and
 263 turning the mountain into a theme park, “travel agencies specialized in adventures, where you go to the end of the world with
 264 guide, also offer the Mountain Place, which is sold as Dineyland” (Ecomedia, 2021). This line of argument is partially
 265 supported by national authorities that evoke “occasional incivilities and threats to public order” (Dauphine Libéré, 2019;
 266 Montagne Magazine 2018).

267
 268 With a broader perspective, dramatising and blaming also target wrongful actions and behaviours connected to environmental
 269 and ecological issues. While spectacular events such as the landing of a plane 400 meters from the summit remain
 270 exceptional (Montagnes Magazine, 2019), daily disrespects accumulate, “people do anything by leaving their rubbish, they
 271 don't care if Mountain Place becomes a despised mountain” (Radio France, 2018). The heat wave that swept over France in
 272 2022 finally highlighted the dramatic ecological consequences of climate change (Le Dauphiné Libéré, 2022). More and
 273 more crevasses and moraines¹ appeared, rock falls “like fridges” (Le Figaro, 2022) started earlier in the Couloir du Goûter,
 274 and the risk of avalanches increased (BBC, 2022). At the same time, it offered an additional opportunity for dramatizing and
 275 blaming, “the management of ski lifts [...] has for several years been based solely on the notion of profit for the benefit of the
 276 shareholders of these companies. Thus, the notion of dividends has completely erased that of public service even though their
 277 contract is called “delegation of public service”” (Press release, 2022).

278
 279 While the facts are not disputed (accidents, deterioration of the environment due to climate change, poorly equipped people)
 280 some voices tend to nuance the interpretation with the intent to restore the image of the area (Montagnes Magazine, 2019;
 281 2020). However, ecological concerns combined with dramatized incidents and blaming actors constituted a solid ground for
 282 legitimizing the need for regulations, “instead of believing that we will be able to reverse the climatic changes decided by the
 283 masters of the universe, instead of thinking that the situation only concerns 2022, we must take strong, adult and adapted
 284 measures” (UKC News, 2022).

285
 286 **Instrumentalising** refers to the ways laws and regulations are used to restrict access to the Mountain Place as well as the way
 287 that the media are mobilised to give echo to these initiatives.

288 Over the years, Municipality B leading this regulating dynamic ensured the voice was heard by issuing frequent press releases
 289 and using the media. As we showed dramatizing and blaming are achieved by using emotional and/or provocative
 290 vocabulary, which increases the chances of being published and echoed very quickly. Latest controversial communication
 291 occurred in summer 2022. In the context of the heat wave that degraded the conditions of the mountain and considering that
 292 people kept on climbing despite the increased risk, the creation of a deposit of 15,000€ was suggested to cover rescue and
 293 funeral fees if needed (BBC, 2022). In front of the massive contestation from the climbing community and other public
 294 authorities, Municipality B specified that the suggestion was to be understood as a “second-degree suggestion” (France Info,
 295 2022). The extensive use of the media has not gone unnoticed both by the mainstream local press (Le Dauphiné Libéré, 2023)
 296 and more specialised ones (Alpine Mag, 2020; Le Faucigny, 2023) with a bit of sarcasm.

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 298 However, this mediatic lobbying, seconded by letters and exhortations to the French President (Chamonix.net, 2019; Le
 299 Dauphine Libéré, 2022) supported the multiplication of regulations that became increasingly constraining and compelling
 300 over the years (see table 1). Interestingly, the regulation dynamic can be divided in two the values and concerns in which the
 301 regulations are grounded. From 2017 until 2020, texts are related to safety and law enforcement. The 2020 permanent decree
 302 embeds itself in more ecological concerns connected to environmental and climate change issues.

303
 304 **Table 1. The accumulation of regulations**

Authority	Year	Main regulations
Municipality A	2017	<u>Article 1</u> : Any mountaineer taking the so-called "royal route" [...] must be equipped with the list of equipment appended to this order <u>Appendix</u> : The minimum essential equipment to attempt the ascent of Mountain Place is a hat, sunglasses, ski goggles, sunscreen, warm jacket, waterproof jacket, mountain pants, over-trousers, mountaineering boots that can be fitted with crampons, crampons adjusted to the shoes, harness and crevasse exit kit, rope, ice axe, GPS or compass and altimeter
Prefecture of the Department	2018	<u>Article 1</u> : From July 14 and for a period of 8 days, access to the summit of the Mountain Place by the route of the Aiguille du Goûter, the Dôme du Goûter and the Bosses ridge beyond the Tête Rousse glacier is only authorized for people with proof of a reservation at the Refuge [...], only accommodation on the route

¹ ridges of sediments left behind by glaciers they melt

2019 & 2020	<u>Article 2</u> : The French Federation of Alpine Mountain Clubs operating the huts is required to collect the identities of the people who have booked and communicate them to the hierarchical authority [...] for the sole purpose of ensuring the implementation of the article 1 of this decree
2020	Permanent decree <u>Article 2</u> : [...] it is prohibited, within the perimeter: [...] 2-2-1 to practice any activity other than mountaineering, mountaineering-paragliding, paralpinism, skiing/snowboarding-mountaineeing; 2-2-2 [...]to progress in a rope of more than three people, except in situations imposed by security or assistance to other climbers

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In 2017, a municipal order targeting trailers was issued to ensure climbers were sufficiently equipped. While the content of the list was criticised for requiring sunscreen but not a helmet (Le Dauphine Libéré, 2017), the mandatory equipment routinized the preparation. The text was mainly symbolic as no law enforcement units were technically skilled enough to implement it (L'Equipe, 2017; T, 2017). However, some practitioners reacted quite strongly by ridiculing the initiative. Less than 24 hours following the order, a famous trailer published a picture of him naked at the summit of the Mountain Place commenting “well, if you climb from the Italian side, it’s legal, right?”.

The following year, a series of decrees restricted access to the Mountain Place for a limited period of time. It was compelling since it was issued by the Prefecture, which is the local representation of the state. Such a move was viewed as a possible direction towards a more permanent regulation (L'Express, 2018, Montagne Magazine, 2018). This measure was accompanied locally by creating a “white squad” with an effective start in 2019 (Le Dauphine Libéré, 2018). Grounded in the issue of safety, this local law enforcement unit's mission is to control climbers with the measures listed in the new decrees that repeated the actions taken in 2018, namely being properly equipped and having a booking in the hut on the way to the summit.

The recurrence of the decrees created a collective initiative in the area, bringing together the municipalities tied to the Mountain Place and the State, to find a solution to the safety concerns. The initiative was appreciated “given the excesses observed and the difficulty in managing certain situations, the need to regulate behavior that does not respect mountaineering practices on the easiest access routes to Mountain Place, **this approach seems relevant to us** [emphasis in the text]” (Press release, 2020). It led to the permanent prefectural decree of 2020. Interestingly, the document is grounded in environmental issues as its purpose is mainly to preserve wild life natural habitat in the face of the consequences of climate change on one hand and of unacceptable behaviours on the other one (Prefectural decree, 2020). To do so, some activities became forbidden and those that are allowed are regulated. The shift towards ecological concerns is opportunistic as “the purpose of this type of decree is to protect natural habitats, which, in the case of the normal routes to Mountain Place, is not obvious” (Montagnes Magazine, 2020) according to one municipality, but in another municipality’s own words “it is the quickest we found” (France Info, 2020). Anyway, some activities are forbidden while others are heavily regulated. Finally, access to the Mountain Place becomes *de facto* slightly restricted “the threat of regulating mountaineering remains rather than working on a transition in tourism and real protection of the mountain” (Montagnes magazine, 2020).

This dynamic relies heavily on regulations and limits access and practices in the mountain. Consequently, the nature of risk is reframed. The initial ecological risk of accidents due to the dangerous nature of mountain settings is turned into individual dangerous behaviours that need to be turned into torts as they jeopardize people’s lives and safety. All the motives and considerations listed in the decrees put safety and the risk of accident in the forefront. The underlying idea is that accidents occur because climbers and trailers, especially, do not take the necessary precautions. This results in 100 rescue operations every summer and 10 deaths according to Municipality B’s estimation (Municipal order, 2017). This is what the municipality wants to fight (France Info, 2018). Legally, when an accident occurs in the mountain, rescue operations are handled for free by the PGHM that is under prefectural authority. With an average cost of 3,800€/hour (Cour des comptes, 2012) such interventions weight on the tax payers, which is the angle of the reframing creating a range of fines that are applicable in case of non-compliance:

- 38€ if climbers do not have the listed equipment (2017 order)
- 300,000€ in case on camping on the mountain (2019 + 2020 seasonal decrees)
- 30,000€ in case of rebellion + 3 years in prison (2019 + 2020 seasonal decree)

B. Dynamic 2: Responsibilising

[the depth and the stakes around this dynamic appears during the data collection in May 2023. Therefore, this section will need more elaboration and further analysis.]

352 This second dynamic is deemed to be more collective as it gathers Municipality A, mountain guides, and sports federations
353 (mountaineering and climbing, mountaineering clubs, hiking). Freedom lies at its core as a historical connection to the place
354 and to mountain climbing. Risk management is individualised by *heroizing freedom* and *coordinating* actors involved in
355 climbing activities.

356
357 **Heroizing freedom** relates to the usual reference to freedom as a core value of mountain climbing to justify the refusal of any
358 regulation of the practice and the environment. Freedom is one of the cornerstone values in France. It is written in the
359 pediment of all official building such as townships, schools or any administrative building. Even if it is not explicitly
360 mentioned in the Constitution, freedom of circulation is a fundamental right that has constitutional value. Freedom is deeply
361 connected to the French Revolution. It has been embodied in the painting by Delacroix “*La liberté guidant le peuple*” in
362 1830, which was used on the 100 FRF bank note until the Euro started in 2002.

363
364 Since the first ascent of the Mountain Place in 1786, mountaineering developed as a sport. Associated with the notions of
365 adventure, competition and discovery, it is mainly embedded in values such as freedom and solidarity (Agresti, 2018).
366 Freedom is mainly understood as the liberty to go wherever they want according to the mountaineer’s or climber’s abilities,
367 as well as the absence of material arrangements that guide or constrain the practice in the natural setting. It became a myth
368 over the years with the publication of the book “*the conquistadors of the useless*” by a famous French guide and mountain
369 climber Lionel Terray in 1961, with the famous saying attributed to Sir Edmund Hillary “*because it’s there*”, with the
370 dramatic death of Vincendon and Henry whose long agony in the Mont-Blanc shaped the mountain rescue system in France.
371 Patrick Berhault and Patrick Edlinger, two famous figures of climbing and mountaineering in the 1980, made climbing an art
372 and freedom a way of living. Consequently, freedom is often depicted as “*intrinsic*” to the setting where people can dream
373 and project their craziest ambitions (Alpine Mag, 2021; Kairn.com, 2013). This myth is also enhanced and heroized by the
374 multiplication of documentaries portraying heroes achieving the impossible such as the “*14x8000*” on Netflix, or movies
375 picturing dramatic outcomes such as the movie “*Everest*” based on the book “*into thin air*” by Jon Krakauer.

376
377 The actors involved in this second dynamic naturally claim tradition and this culture of freedom to make their voice heard
378 and legitimate. While the tension between freedom and regulation has been ongoing for a long time (Le Dauphiné Libéré,
379 2013), the claim felt stronger in 2022. Under the aegis of Municipality A, local actors of mountaineering and climbing issued
380 a press release titled “*the mountain must remain a space of freedom in the face of the temptation of all security*” that was sent
381 and published by local and national newspapers (Le Dauphiné Libéré, 2022; Le Monde, 2022). This publication comes as an
382 answer to the decision to close two huts on the normal route to the Mountain Place, which was considered unilateral. In the
383 document, actors assert “*as mountain professionals, elected officials, French federation of alpine mountain clubs,*
384 *mountaineering celebrities, amateur mountaineers, we collectively call for people to choose responsibility, humility and*
385 *freedom*” (Press release, 2022).

386
387 As underlined several times when talking with mountain professionals and with people working in municipalities, this second
388 dynamic should not be seen as opposed to the first one. The stated aim here is to create solutions collectively to the
389 challenges brought by climate change and some “*erratic behaviours*” (Montagnes magazine, 2020), “*if the mountain is a*
390 *space of freedom, it is not a lawless zone. It is up to all actors to tend to improve training, informing, transmitting and*
391 *sensibilising*” (Le Dauphiné Libéré, 2023). Consequently and very soon after the publication of the press release, the
392 municipality issued a second press release announcing that a concertation gathering all actors involved would take place in
393 Spring 2023. The goal was “*It will be an opportunity to share good practices, our engagements, and courses of action to meet*
394 *the challenge of the many transformations underway. [...] We will work with respect for the sensitivities of the actors*
395 *involved, but always with our sights set on the great values that bring us together around this platform: freedom,*
396 *responsibility and humility*” (Press release, 2022) A few days before the meeting, the purpose of the gathering was reiterated:
397 “*continuing to suggest proposals on how mountaineering can continue to express itself in a complicated context of climate*
398 *change. [...] obviously, considerations can be linked to practices, to the right balances to be found between responsibility*
399 *and freedom*” (Interview in Radio Mountain Place, 2023). The meeting was anchored in the values of alpinism, mythologised
400 by its classification as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2019, “*alpinism as intangible cultural*
401 *heritage should be the point of reference which defines the commitments of the signatory states with a key notion, that of*
402 *guaranteeing the accessibility of the high mountains*” (opening discourse of a mountain guide). As mentioned by several
403 actors during the meeting “*regulations should be the last resort*”.

404
405 Heroizing freedom turns the freedom of circulation into an inalienable right of mountaineers and alpinists. In this light, the
406 second dynamic looks like a mirror to the first one. To the tendency to regulate and restrict reflects the willingness of
407 preserving freedom as it if was grounded in individual and collective responsibility of actors from the community.

408
409 **Coordinating** relates to the efforts of professionals to work collectively and in autonomy to find suitable solutions to solve
410 both the issues of accidentology in the mountain and to maintain their liberty in mountaineering. These coordination efforts
411 are less mediated since professionals tend to remain silent with the press regarding their initiatives. However, two
412 tendencies combine with one another: autoregulation of professionals “*High mountain guides are both leading observers but*
413 *are also driving forces in the necessary adaptation of routes in the face of these upheavals*” (Press release, 2023) and

414 coordination of actors “the municipality B, the SNGM and the FFCAM undertake to work on the constitution of a collective
415 which brings together the territories, amateurs, associations and professionals to enhance this living heritage that is
416 mountaineering, to develop the ‘Terre d’Alpinisme’ label, and support its registration with UNESCO” (Ibid).
417 Risk management is part of the training and the daily practice of mountain guides. For example, before during and after an
418 expedition, they use a matrix to assess the overall risk by regularly evaluating the weather and ecological conditions, the
419 terrain and human abilities. As professionals, they are indeed legally responsible for any accidents that may occur during the
420 expedition. As such, they manage risk daily in the light of their own experience and expertise. As phrased in the subheading
421 of an article “auto-regulation, [is] an obligation” (Montagne magazine, 2018). However, the self-regulation of mountain
422 guide does not exclude that they are on their own to evaluate the risk. The multiplication of Whatsapp groups shared among
423 guides or phone apps more or less participative help them to connect with each other and to get real-time information.
424 Considering their contractual responsibility “self-regulation seems to have become the last bastion for guides against the risk
425 of state regulation whose constraints would be poorly adjusted” (Montagne magazine, 2018).

426
427 As a complement to this intra-sector coordination among guides that enhances their individual and professional responsibility
428 to manage risk, the meeting announced in 2022 typically embodies the willingness to coordinate. While it was initially
429 communicated by Municipality A, the meeting was indeed a co-organisation of the municipality with some local
430 professionals. Interestingly, departing from the core value of freedom of practice and access to the mountain, the overall
431 framework of the meeting was grounded in challenges raised by climate change. However, this specific angle allowed all
432 actors to transcend competing views and to converge on long-term concerns while anchoring their reflections in the values of
433 alpinism including freedom. The collective dimension of the work to be done was strongly emphasized in the opening
434 discourses:
435

436 *We need to find an answer that can be collective and not in the reaction of what happens in the*
437 *moment (Speaker n°1)*

438 *We have issues that sometimes collide. We have to develop our ability to cooperate to prevent it from*
439 *degenerating into conflict. For that, we need to talk to each other more and talk to each other better*
440 *(Speaker n°2)*

441 *Decisions made alone are bad. It is a necessity to see each other and to discuss (Speaker n°3)*

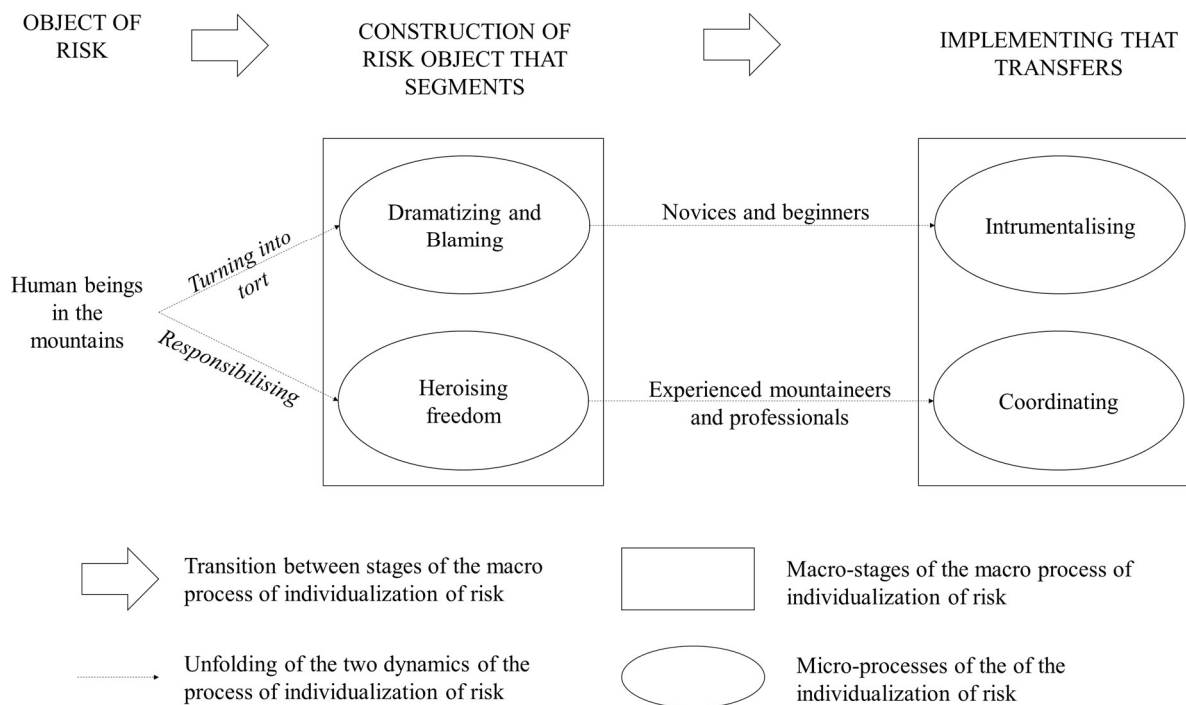
442
443 The meeting lasted two days and dealt with various topics ranging from frequentation of the routes to accidents and rescue
444 operation evoking communication issues and international coordination since the Mountain Place can be accessed from
445 several countries. The meeting looked like a kick-off of a big information project about coordination of actors that will need
446 structuration and leadership “we are faced with a phenomenon of emergencies, emergencies with ‘ies’. The major problem is
447 the climatic emergency which is disrupting professional and amateur practices. We also have an urgent need for structuring.
448 We love our freedom to practice. Unlike other ecosystems, we are more independent, we are less in the collective” (Speaker
449 1).
450

451 This dynamic looks grounded in mountain culture claiming to be embedded in historical values tied to mountaineering and
452 alpinism and on the expertise of the professional involved in the process. Rather than transferring risk management issues to
453 climbers, the focus is here on professionals and their individual and collective responsibility to elaborate coordinated and
454 concerted answers. The underlying belief being that structured practices will preserve their freedom. The willingness to be
455 able to achieve teamwork, which was labelled as ‘collective competence’, turned to be the major ambition of the two-days
456 meeting and of the follow-up gathering that should occur in the future.
457

458 C. Combining or not combining efforts? That is the (controversial) question

459 Far from being settled, the debate and the tensions between freedom and safety is a burning issue in mountain climbing in
460 general and in the Mountain Place area in particular. While the mediatic picture tend to contrast the two approaches by
461 playing on the opposition of safety versus freedom, our data show that despite their differences, the two dynamic display
462 some similarities. In this sense, it highlights that confronted to the necessity to address their legal duty to ensure safety
463 municipalities choose to share this responsibility by enacting an individualization process. While the form and the argument
464 might differ depending on the dynamic, the process is two-staged. It starts by a reframing of risk that segments the audience
465 to target individuals. Then, it operationalizes the process creating or using tools to actually transfer the risk onto the targets
466 (see figure 1).
467

Fig. 1. The risk individualization process



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Constructing the risk object encompasses the discursive practices developed to construct transform the object of risk (the human presence in the mountains) into specific risk objects whose potential harms need to be addressed. Mountain activities are inherently risky since the setting in itself in dangerous. Mountaineers distinguish between what they call ‘objective risks’ – those related to the ecological setting such as rock falls, avalanches or crevasses – and ‘subjective risks’ – those related to the ability to cope with the risks and that stem from deliberate decision of individuals to immerse themselves in the setting . Therefore, practitioners are in a delicate position where they must manage risks in a place where safety is also the legal responsibility of municipalities.

The two dynamics shed light on different aspects of the risks inherent to mountain activities, namely the potential occurrence of an event of severe, even lethal consequences. The first dynamic dramatizes each and every accident and puts the blame on individual behaviors. The second dynamic appeals to the values of mountaineering and alpinism mythologized by heroic stories and by UNESCO classification. In fact, this reframing of risk segments the public of practitioners into two categories. First, novices and beginners are the new climbers recently brought to the mountains after the lockdown of the pandemic “*they were sold the mountains as a place to take some fresh air, it’s easy*” (hut guard). The deeply lack mountain culture, meaning they do not necessarily understand what hiking, climbing and mountaineering activities are about. From ignorance and sometimes from lack of money, they do not hire professionals and they act in a way that can be considered as dangerous or erratic. This specific audience is labelled ‘cranks’ or pseudo-alpinists’ in the first dynamic. Second, we have experienced mountaineers, who are considered as semi-professionals, and professionals, mainly mountain guides. The former do not hire a guide because they have the technical abilities and knowledge of the mountains and their dangers. They know that they shall look for information about the weather and the conditions, and they know where to look for those information. As a mountain guide stated during the meeting “*a guide is an amateur whose body is that of a professional*”. The latter were the most numerous during the two-days meeting. Both experienced mountaineers and professionals are the main audience and target of the second dynamic. Interestingly, during the discussions, the stakeholders acknowledged that the novices and beginners are a high-risk population specifically because of their lack of knowledge and experience. However, they were set aside and the discussions mainly focused on professionals and their concerns regarding the frequentation and equipment of routes, finding a ways to coordinate transnational decisions in the commercialisation of the routes.

The second stage of the individualization process is the implementation of the process to transfer the risk to the identified target. In this stage to divergence between the two dynamics increases. The first dynamics transfers the risk by instrumentalising the legal arsenal at disposal. What was seen as inconvenient and irresponsible is turned it into tort by creating illegal practices or behaviours penalised with a fine, and controlled by a specific and dedicated unit. By making the regulations more compelling and permanent, the dynamic raised fear and oppositions and simultaneously achieves individualization in the very short-term. The second dynamic is slower paced. It relies on the tradition of self-regulation and takes a bet on the abilities of professionals to work together. Since the actors involved share common views and knowledge about the environment and the practices, the bet is that they will be able to coordinate a transcend the boundaries of their domains of expertise to find appropriate solutions for their community.

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In conclusion, the two dynamics appear as two initiatives that want to address a common issue but that fail to talk to each other. While municipalities chose to individualise partially the risk management, they address it through different perspectives of the problem, by focusing on specific segments only, and using different tools to operationalise the process. However, the decision to develop an identical solution, namely the individualization process, shows that efforts could be combined. Moreover, and more or less on the margins, the two dynamics claim to tackle environmental and sustainable challenges. Therefore, despite their very different approaches which may seem to be in competition with each other; the two dynamics can find common ground. Nevertheless, it is then a question of putting the egos and the verbal contests of the past aside to sit around the table and define together what is the nature and the contour of the problem to be solved thanks to individualization.

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V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

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This paper provides an exploration of an unfolding controversial individualization process by approaching it as a translation process, whereby risks are socially constructed in a way that both change their meaning and transfers from public actors to individuals. Emergent literature in OMT has focused on the discursive construction of risk as an object, identifying normalizing and problematizing practices to support risk management (Hardy et al., 2020; Maguire & Hardy, 2013). As a complement to this discursive approach, we adopt a process perspective to unveil how the individualization process cascades onto individuals in the form of news constraints, demands and controls (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2011). Our case of individualization in an interorganisational and ecological context shows how risk is transformed and how translation of risk from organizations to individuals might unfold in real time. It enlightens the controversial dynamics and competing framings of risk and underlying values that rise in a such process.

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The context of the Mountain Place area illustrates the challenges of organizing risk at interorganisational level. Confronted with the imperative to design suitable answers to the increasing risk of deadly accidents, the two municipalities around the Mountain Place opted for an individualization process (Hardy et al., 2020). While previous studies emphasized the role of discourse as point of departure of such translation processes (Maguire & Hardy, 2009, 2019), our findings shed light on the individualization process: importance of defining the object of risk and the materialising of the idea (Czarniawska, 2012; Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996). In both dynamics, municipalities connect the risks of accidents and their duty to ensure safety in their area to different concerns and values such as death, freedom, ecological environment and climate change. Interestingly, the two municipalities rely on two different translation processes to frame the risk object. Municipality A relies on ‘parallel practice’ (Piekkari et al., 2020) striving to maintain the contact and the legitimacy of the trajectory by building on the mountaineering traditions, values, and specific terms. Then the translation process is limited and portrays the municipality’s *skopos* whose intention is to reinforce its position as the anchor of the Mountain Place. On the contrary, by relying on strong words and by emphasizing the irresponsible behaviors of climbers Municipality B portrays a more agentic translation process by disrupting its image and the one of the mountains (Piekkari et al., 2020). Doing so, the municipality gives itself the opportunity to decontextualize climbing from the tradition of mountaineering and emplaces (Hilgartner, 1992) it a context of lethal dangers.

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While those different claims display the complexity of organizing risk, they also result in a cacophony of what may sound as excuses to justify their actions or positions. Of course, issues of power and politics are definitely at play. Interestingly, this cacophony also sheds light on the segmentation that is achieved. By differentiating the audience and by categorizing the individuals to whom risk management is transferred, public actors could create an opportunity to design a suitable and acceptable course of action collectively. However, the lack of coordination and agreement between the stakeholders impairs the combination of the two dynamics that address different segments of practitioners and the different forms of adverse events they might encounter on their way to the Mountain Place.

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Our findings also introduce a process view in organizing risk (Hardy et al., 2020) as we articulate discursive framing of risk and implementation in courses of action. Dramatizing and blaming on one hand and heroizing freedom on the other on were used as a legitimate basis to justify the start of a course of action that actually transfers the risk partially to individuals. In the first dynamic, incidents and accidents were dramatized to blame individuals for their irresponsible actions. Therefore, the move towards a rule-based safety (Amalberti, 2013, 2016) that relies on issuing constraining regulations appear as the sole acceptable answer to reduce accidents and preserve the natural environment. In the second dynamic, freedom and responsibility are the two faces of the mountaineering coin, grounded in heroic adventures and stories. The normalized discourse within the community is that accessing the Mountain Place is matter of professionals. Therefore, it feels natural to turn towards a managed safety (Amalberti, 2013, 2016) relying on the expertise of actors (Jubault Krasnopevtseva, 2022; Morel et al., 2008; Nascimento et al., 2014). Then, the municipality who supports this dynamic stays in the background and encourages local organisations to work together and come up with the solutions and actions that they deem appropriate. In terms of practical implications, our preliminary findings suggest that before rushing into courses of actions in the hope to build collective competence, it might be crucial to define the object of risk and to delineate and envision the different angles and perspectives under which it could be seen. Those preliminary discussions might produce a variety of discourses that will

568 segment target individuals whose nature are different. Consequently, it might probably be easier to prioritise those segments
569 before refining the official and overarching discourse that will support the global individualization process.
570

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