

# MEASURING IDENTITY

*Resilient Potentials of Isolated Alpine Communities*

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**Himalayas** (Source: gorhaadventure.com)



**Andes** (Source: theculturetrip.com)



**European Alps** (Source: pinterest.com)



**Nihon Arupusu** (Source: hosinoresorts-magazine.com)

From Bolivia to Bhutan, humans have occupied, altered and honored alpine regions. While consistent climates of mountain ecosystems **globally connect**, their topographical constraints tend to **locally isolate**; inhabitants have developed distinct cultural responses to the challenges and opportunities present in rural alpine areas. When moments of **(ex)change** occur in isolated places (global warming, war, trade, tourism,) what was once considered **foreign**, may now be **familiar**. From insects to shepherds, harsh alpine conditions prompt **creative adaptation**.

+ How does the dynamic relationship between exchange and context shape the **identity** of mountain communities?

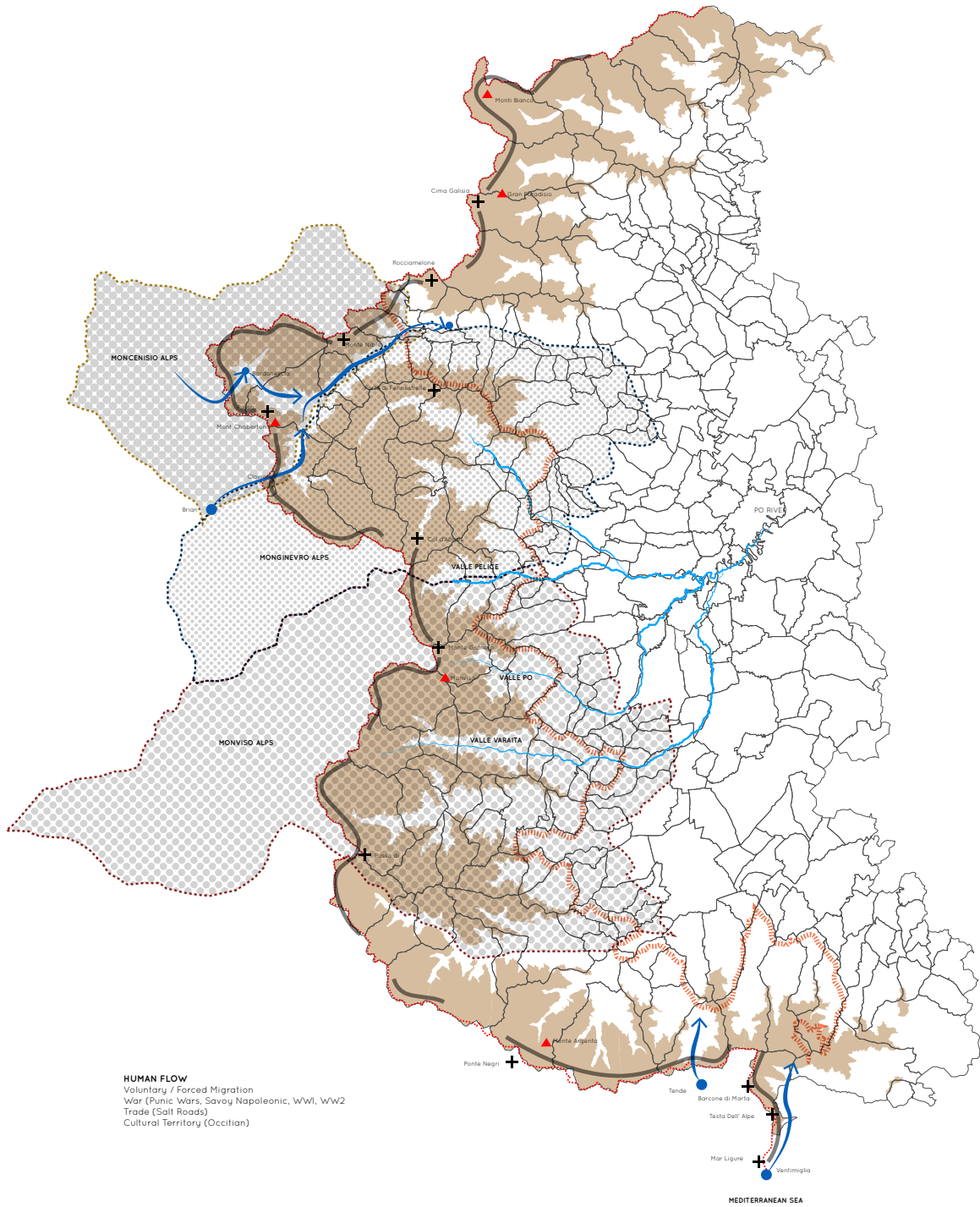
+ Consequently, how can local **identities be leveraged** to explore new strategies for **resilient alpine urbanism** across the globe?

Within the context of the Italian Cottian Alps, this multi-scalar research aims to:

- 1.) **reveal** the layered (and often hidden) identities of this complex region
- 2.) **compare/contrast** the cultural geographies, services, and urbanization of 3 neighboring valleys (Valle Pellice, Valle Po, Valle Varaita)
- 3.) **zoom-in** on the exchanges and infrastructures of Valle Po and the revitalization of its primary village, Ostanda
- 4.) **demonstrate** how the Monviso Institute, among other initiatives, are contributing to regenerative models of sustainable alpine urbanism

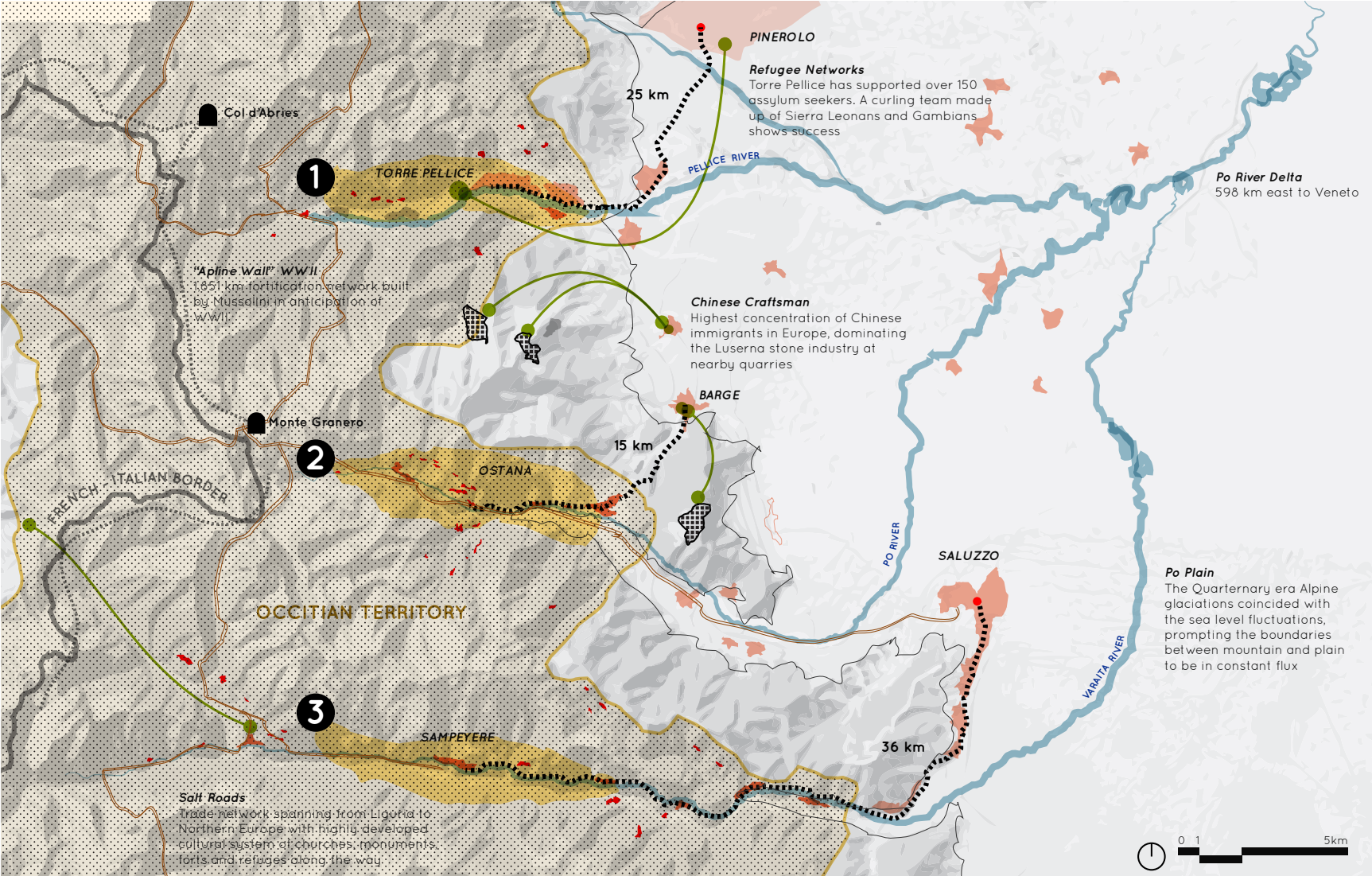


**MACRO-SITE: COTTIAN ALPS**  
Northwest Italy, Piedmont Region



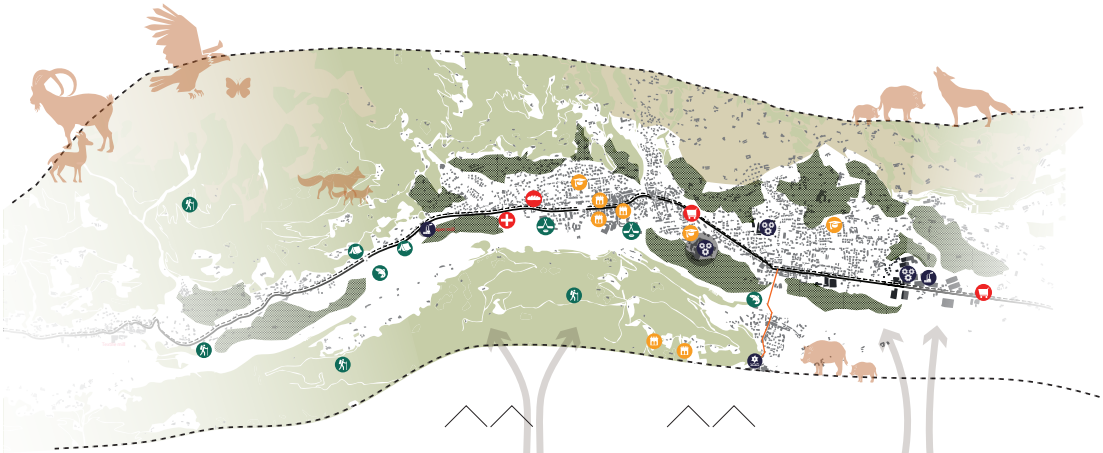


**SITE: (3) VALLEYS**  
(Val Pellice, Valle Po, Val Varaita)

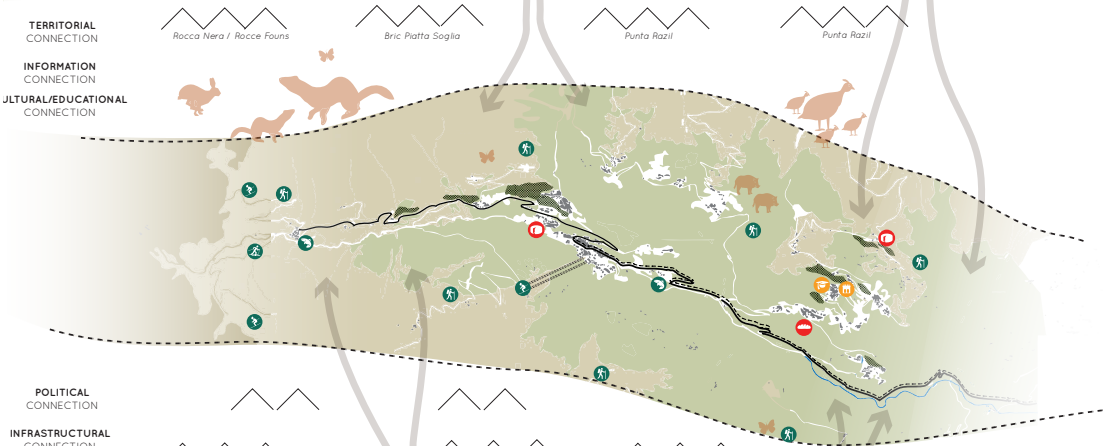


**MID-SITE: OSTANA**  
(Val Pellice, Valle Po, Val Varaita)

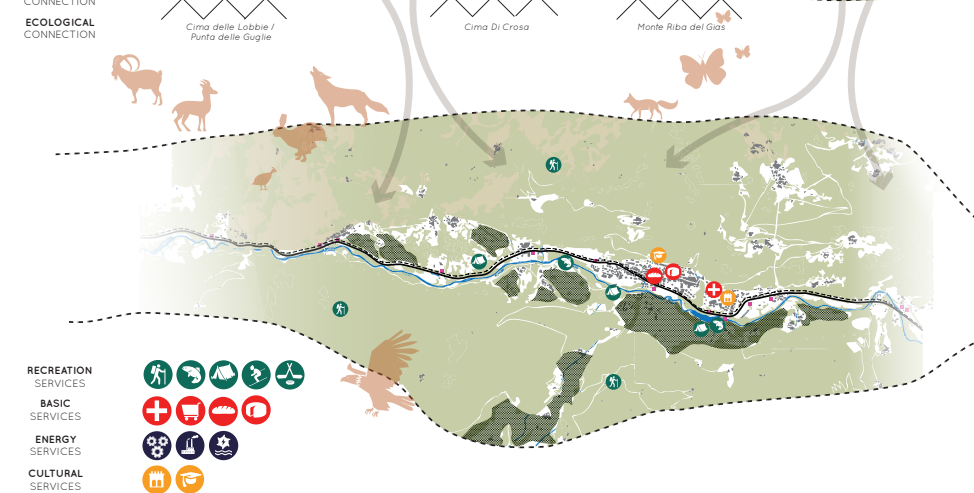
**1 VAL PELLICE**  
Torre Pellice



**2 VALLE PO**  
Ostana



**3 VAL VARAITA**  
Sampeyre



These valleys, villages, infrastructures and subcultures have formed uniquely due to geographic isolation: they are separated each by a micro-mountain range. Population density, service distribution and mobility and relationship to nature jointly shape the special character of each valley.

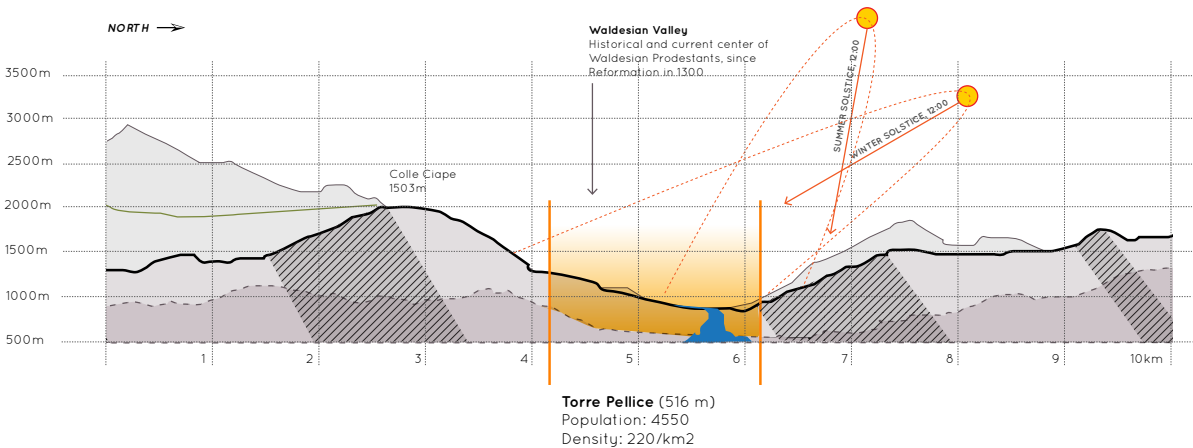
What connections, if any, should be encouraged? How can these valleys generate a mutual, collaborative resilience and share common resources while still maintaining their own identities?

RECREATION  
SERVICES  
BASIC  
SERVICES  
ENERGY  
SERVICES  
CULTURAL  
SERVICES



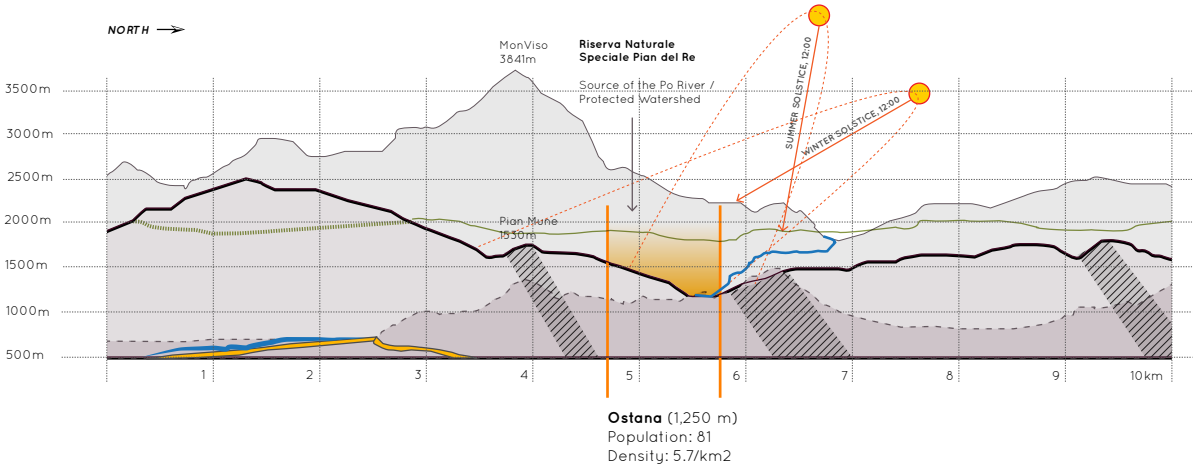
**MID-SITE: OSTANA**  
(Val Pellice, Valle Po, Val Varaita)

**1 VAL PELLICE**



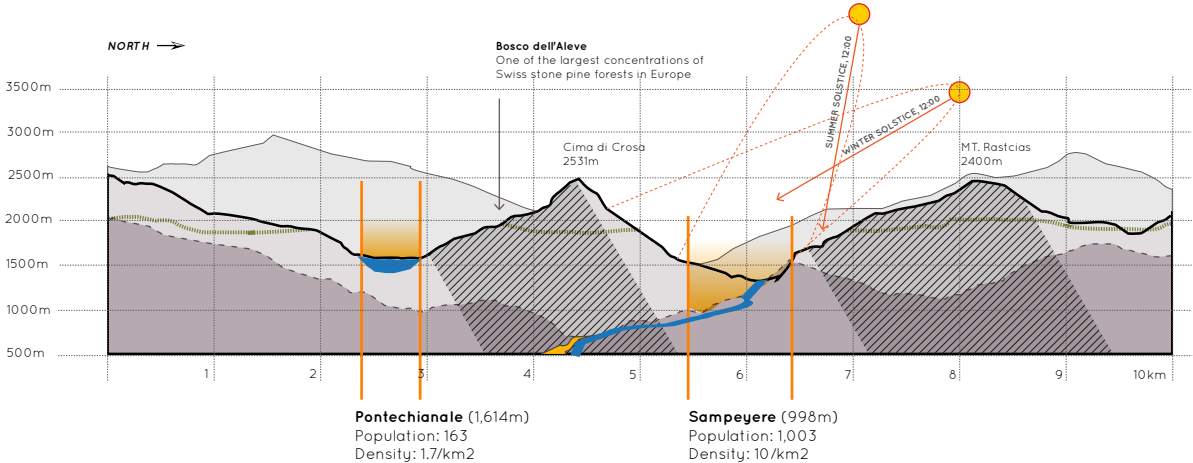
The spatial and temporal complexity of mountain regions can begin to be better clarified in layered cross-sections, which illustrate the rational for settlement locations and the input-output flows that affect them.

**2 VALLE PO**



Mountains have been perceived as both bountiful and exploitable, spiritual and lifeless. While elusive and mystical from afar, these ancient giants offer us a dynamic range of spaces from nooks to plazas. To what extent do “space-making” in alpine areas strike a balance between cultural specificity and climatic consistency?

**3 VAL VARAITA**



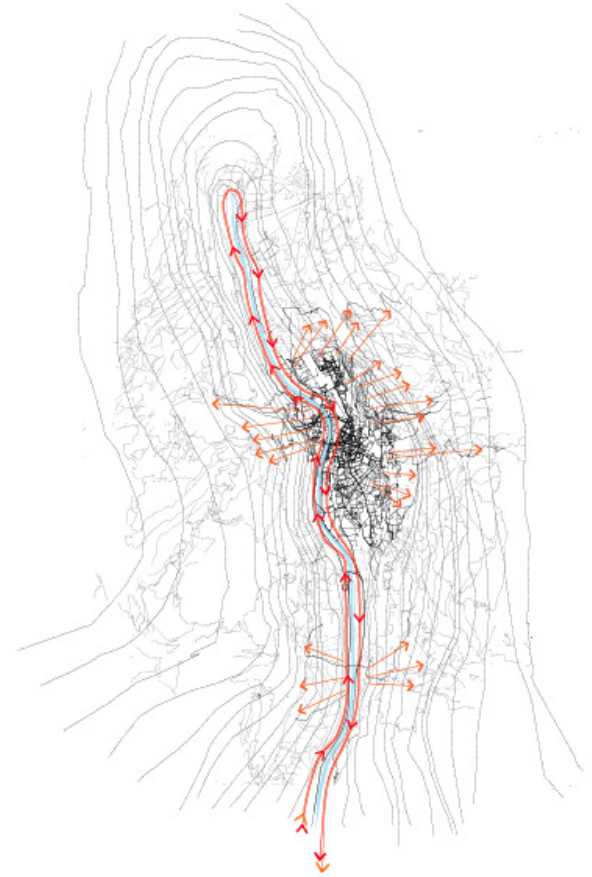
## URBAN TYPOLOGIES

Plains vs. Mountain Regions



### Non-Alpine Urbanism

The geography of flat, plain based urban centers lends itself to multi-directional methods of accessing and sharing information, resources, ideas, etc. They are more exposed to diverse economies, socio-technological networks and cultural support systems.



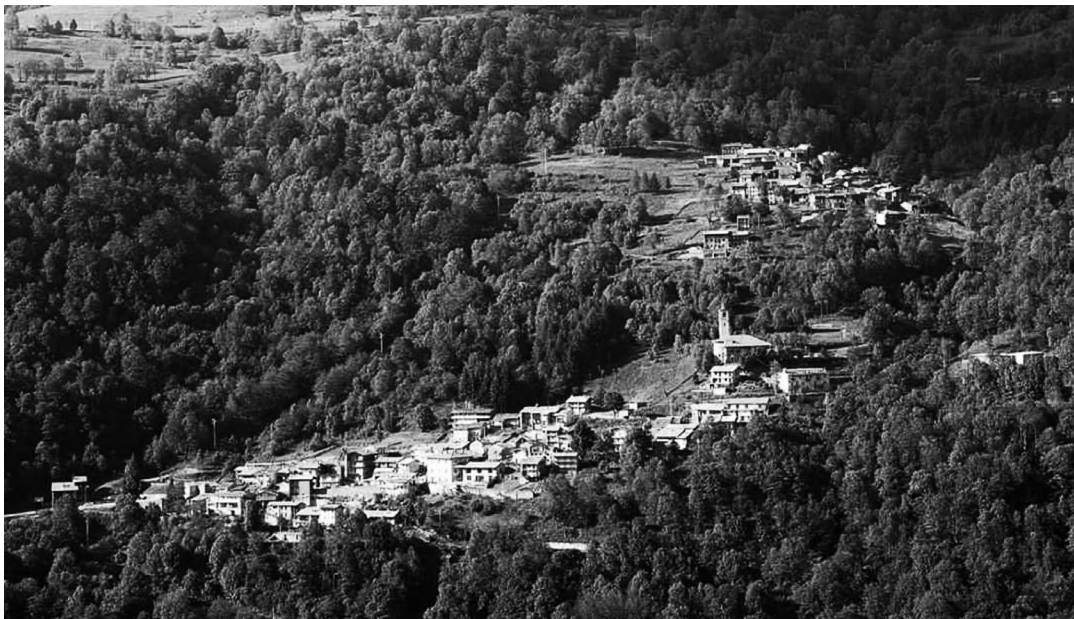
### Alpine Urbanism

Sited along valley floors or perched along shallower slopes, alpine urban centers are territorially limited to a "one-way/in and out" flow as many primary access routes terminate at the end of a valley. Such geometry inherently creates a more insular and limited flow of communication.





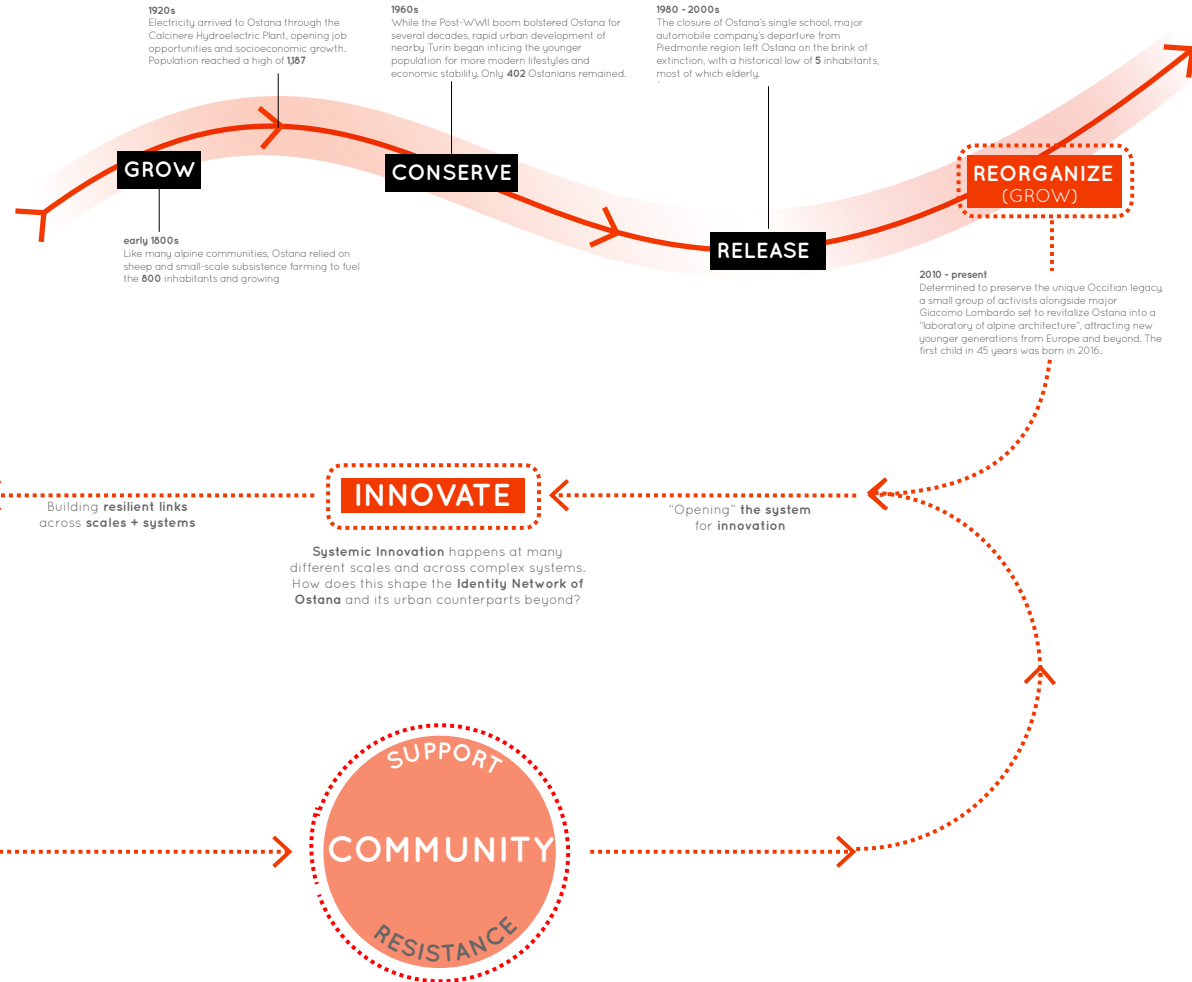
*Image by Tobias Luthe*



*Image by Tobias Luthe*

# RESILIENCY

ADAPTIVE WAVES CYCLE



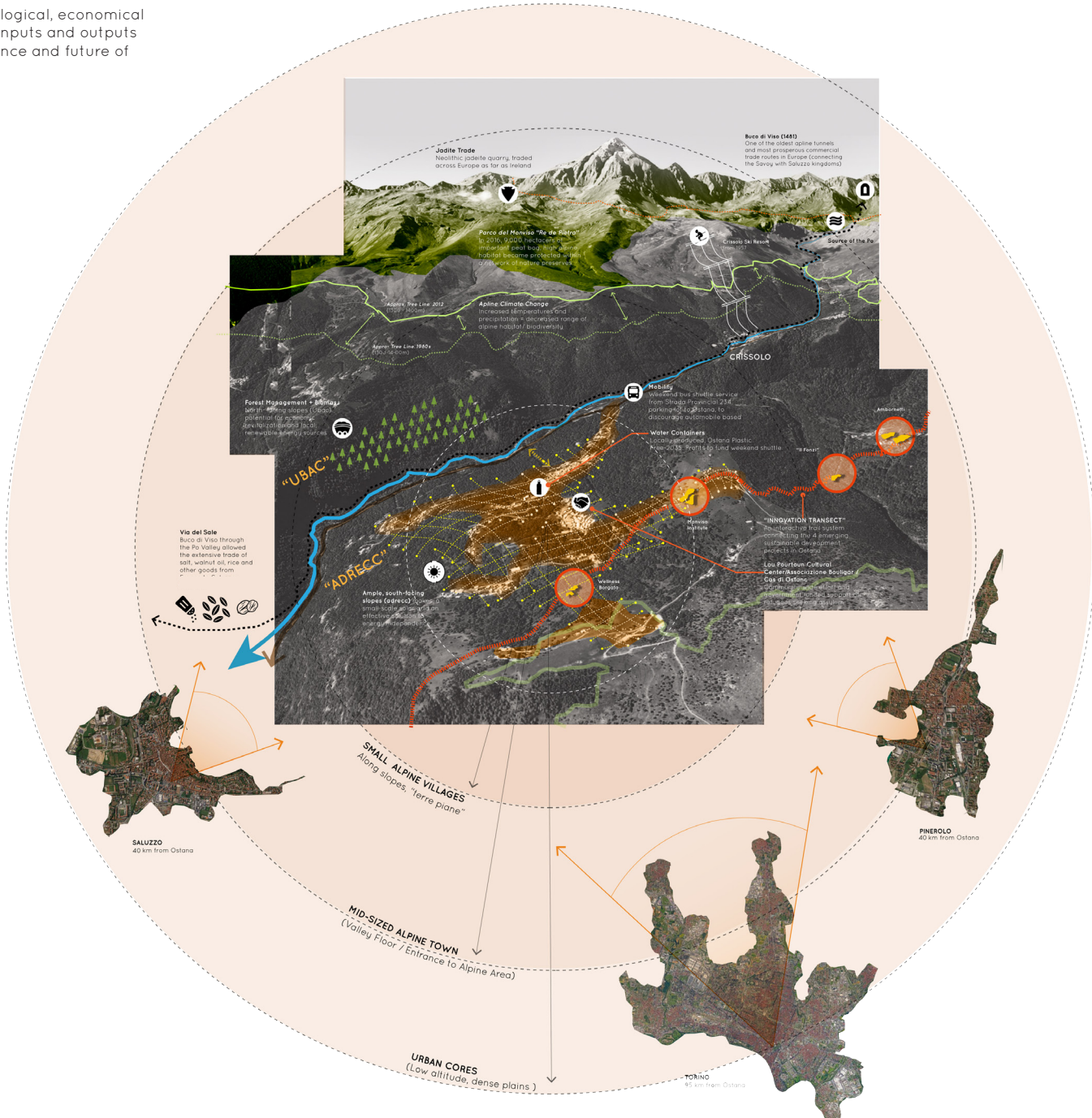
## Layered Narratives

Every June, the celebration *Premio Ostanà: Writings in the Mother Tounge* awards Occitan authors, cultivating the lingue d'oc culture



OSTANA IDENTITY NETWORK (Po Valley)

How do the historical, ecological, economical and cultural exchange of inputs and outputs impact the identity, resilience and future of mountain communities?



**MINI-SITE: MONVISO INSTITUTE (MVI)**

MVI operates as a real-world laboratory for understanding and shaping systemic innovation within Ostana and beyond. The campus is sensitively being adapted from six traditional stone buildings into energy efficient, functional spaces.



**MINI-SITE: MONVISO INSTITUTE (MVI)**

The first building on campus, carbon net-positive passive house “Il Doppio” encourages sustainable living practices in Ostana, providing both supporters and skeptics learning opportunities for nature-based solutions.

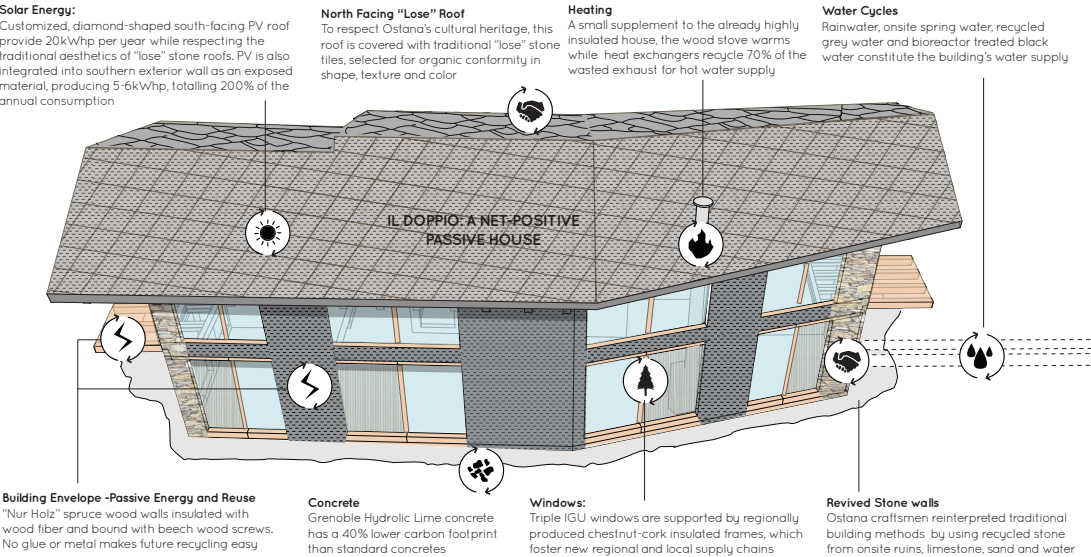


Image by Tobias Luthe



## MINI-SITE: MONVISO INSTITUTE (MVI)

How can the discussion on local resilient alpine urbanism cycle back to global connections? MVI's recently founded Regenerative Design Talks provide collaborative platforms for workshop engagement on topics related to the interconnected relationship of design, nature, the built environment and mountain identity in Ostana and beyond.



**RDT 1st Edition: Bridging Synergies in Upcoming Development Projects of Ostana**  
*May 4, 2019 (Ostana)*

**Climate Change: Renewable Energy and E-Mobility for Climate Protection**, with *Guest Speaker Luca Mercalli and Ross Harding* July 9, 2019 (Ostana)

**Biomimicry: Nature-based Innovation for Complete Design Challenges**, with *Guest Speaker Dayna Baumeister, Biomimicry Institute at Arizona State USA* September 28, 2019 (Ostana)

**Building and Designing with Hemp: Revival of a Forbidden Plant**, with *Guest Speaker/ Instructor Werner Schonthal, 360 Hemp, South Tyrol Italy* October 26, 2019 (Ostana)



*Images by Tobias Luthé*

\* All images and diagrams were created by Haley Fitzpatrick unless otherwise stated. Information gathered through in-person observation and study, discussions with local inhabitants, regional policy-makers, scientists, architects and urbanists. References for specific text information/descriptions throughout this presentation found below\*

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