

ALPTEXTYLES

COMMUNICATING "MADE IN THE ALPS"

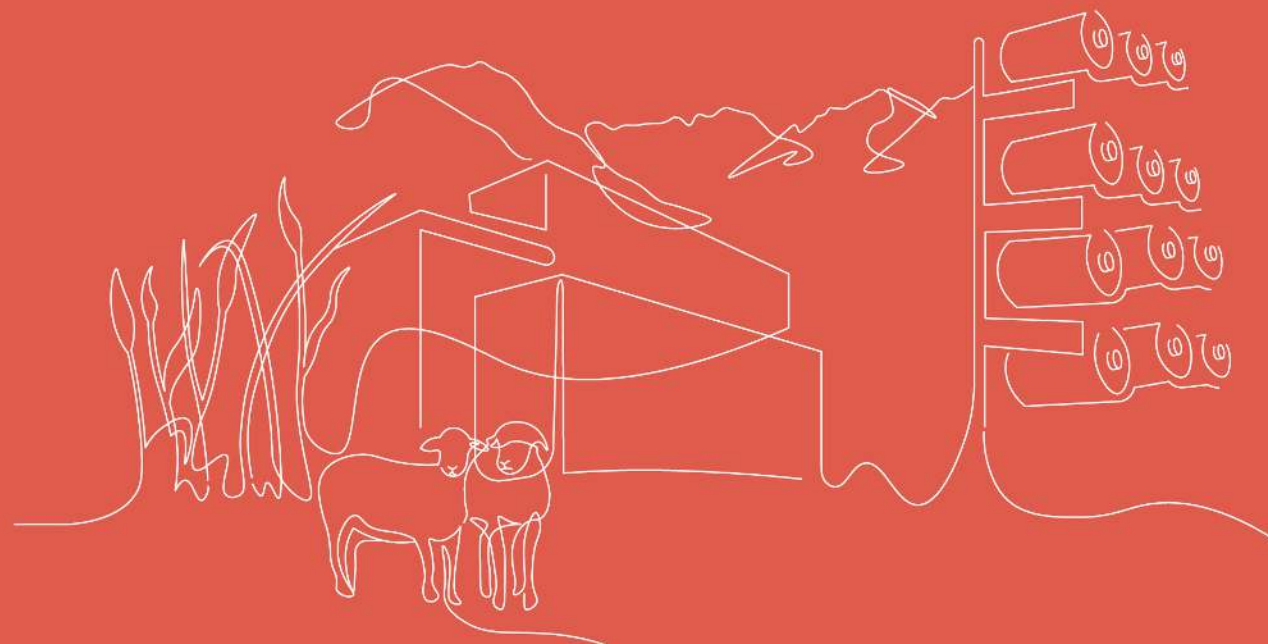


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Introduction

The goal of this AlpTextyles deliverable is to offer an analysis of how the Alps are used in the promotional activities of textile/fashion companies.

The emlyon business school's lifestyle research center and Bellissimo, a communication design studio, conducted a comprehensive analysis of the communication strategies employed by both manufacturing and artisanal firms. The objective of this study was to identify exemplary practices, provide constructive critiques, and address key communication challenges faced by these firms. This research aims to offer insights and practical recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of communication strategies within these sectors.

- On the emlyon business school side, research activities were coordinated Diego Rinallo, with contributions from Marta Pizzetti, Verena Gruber, and Miriam Leite Farias.
- On the Bellissimo side, Alessandro Bevilacqua, Giancarlo Traina and Cristina Ortali, serving as communication experts, discussed the research findings. They contributed to developing actionable insights from academic perspectives, leveraging their professional expertise in communication.

This deliverable also integrates data from the ARPAF-III 'Made in the Alps' project, which we gratefully acknowledge.

- The Alpine Region Preparatory Action Fund project 'Made in the Alps' (2022-23) conducted an analysis of trademarks containing references to the Alps in their names. The partners of the Made in the Alps project (i.e., Polo Poschiavo, ZRC SAZU, and emlyon business school) are also involved in the AlpTextyles project. This overlap facilitated the transfer of knowledge between the two projects.



This deliverable is structured as follows:

Part 1: Based on research findings reported in AlpTextyles (2024a), this section summarizes how the Alps can add symbolic value to textile and clothing brands.

Part 2: Building on research findings from the ARPAF-III 'Made in the Alps' project (2023a), this section reports a structured content analysis of Alpine references in textile trademarks.

Part 3: Focused on industrially produced sport and fashion brands, this section identifies and critically discusses the key models through which brands may relate to the Alps in their communication campaigns.

Part 4: This section identifies communication challenges and good practices for textile crafts producers.

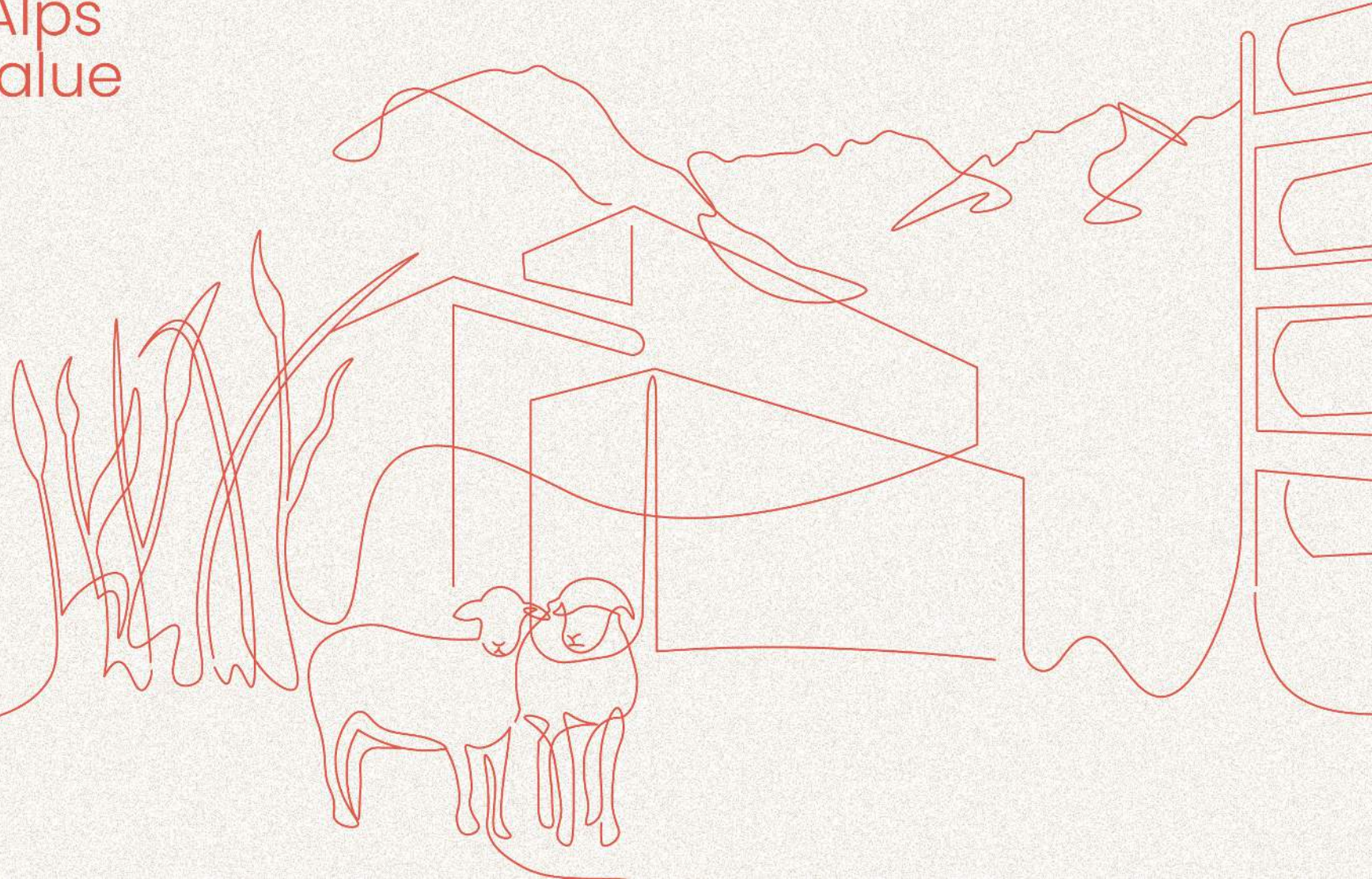


1

The image of the Alps and its symbolic value for brands

Priority 2

Carbon neutral and resource



Territories project an image, which businesses in their communication activities use and further reinforce.

The Alps have always had great symbolic significance. Until the Middle Ages and the early modern era, they were perceived as a formidable and fear-inducing natural barrier filled with both real and imagined dangers.

Romanticism saw the Alps as a place of unspoiled nature where customs and traditions of the past had survived, and where one could take refuge from the noisy, crowded and polluted environment of big cities.

Such meanings are now being actualized by the outdoor experiences, winter sports and summer hikes that constitute one of the most typical ways of enjoying the mountains.



Ansicht der Villacher Alpe gegen Manhart by
Johann Werner (Künstler_in) - 1845 - Albertina,
Austria - Public Domain.

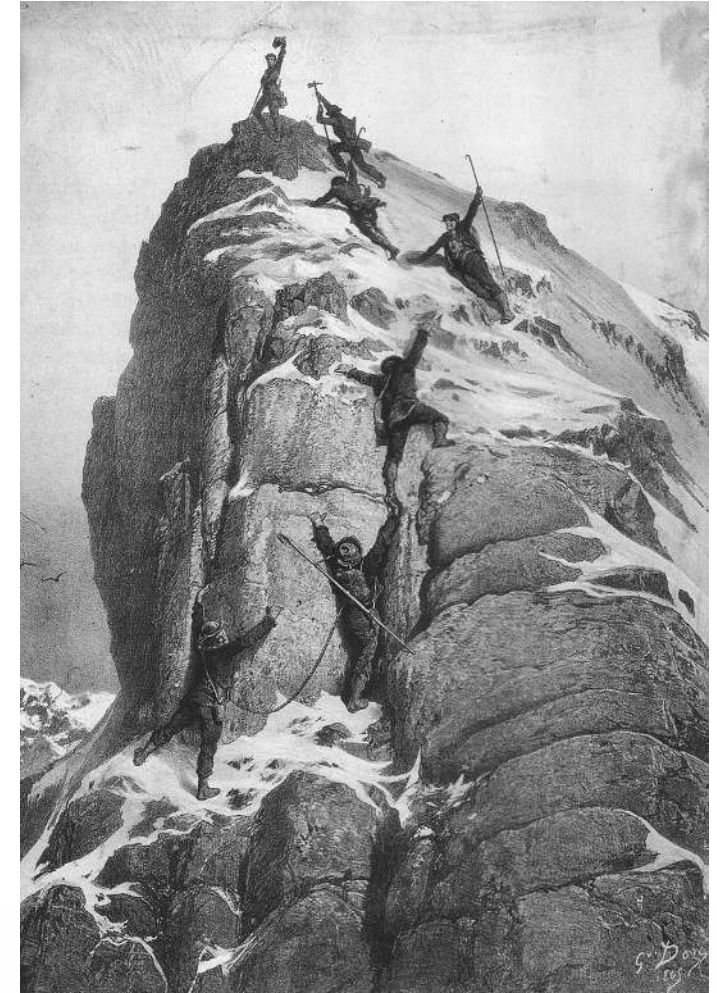
<https://www.europeana.eu/item/15508/29619>

Alpinism saw the Alps as a challenge – that of reaching the peaks, rising to the heights and 'touching the sky.' The spread of skiing and other mountain sports helped spread the image of the Alps as a place to be challenged and conquered.

The spread of tourism, once intended only for the upper classes, has connoted the Alps as a luxury destination and a sought-after destination for the rich and famous.

This Alpine repertoire of cultural meanings, each originated in specific historical periods, still emerges in consumer interviews (AlpTextyles, 2024a). It is thus available to brands to add symbolism to their products depending on their history, market positioning, and promotional goals.

Seen as a place brand (see Figure 1.1), the Alps can be used to convey an image linked to nature, heritage and tradition, adventure and exploration, technical performance, and luxury and exclusivity.



The first ascent of the Matterhorn by Gustave Doré.
Public Domain.





Nature

Brands might incorporate images of snow-capped peaks, crystal-clear streams, or green valleys to evoke a sense of freshness and purity in their products or services



Heritage and Tradition

Brands looking to tap into themes of tradition, authenticity, or craftsmanship might use Alpine symbolism to connect with consumers on a deeper cultural level

A wide-angle photograph of three skiers on a snowy mountain slope. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a golden glow and long shadows. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, with some wispy clouds and a few white contrails. The skiers are in the middle ground, moving down the slope. The foreground is a vast, snow-covered expanse with some tracks and shadows.

Adventure and Exploration

Brands seeking to position themselves as adventurous or daring might use Alpine imagery to evoke a sense of excitement and challenge



Technical performance

Brands that produce technical materials can refer to the technical innovations necessary to overcome challenges in Alpine environments

A black sports car, possibly a Porsche Carrera GT, is driving on a snowy track. The car is viewed from the rear, showing its license plate 'EFC 31A'. The background features a dense forest of evergreen trees and a range of large, snow-capped mountains under a clear blue sky. The car is kicking up a small amount of snow as it moves.

Luxury and Exclusivity

Brands seeking to convey an image of luxury, sophistication, or exclusivity might use Alpine imagery to evoke a sense of opulence and refinement

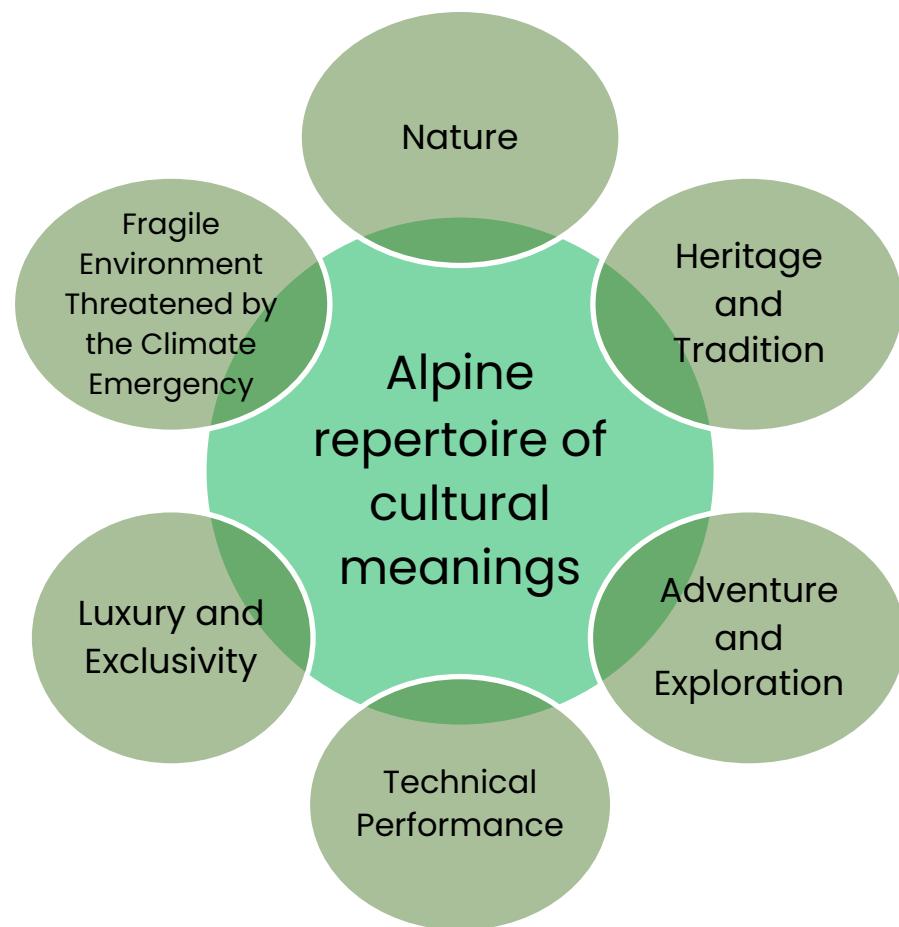
News about climate emergency and melting glaciers is commonplace in the media, and it also recurs in the perceptions of increasingly eco-anxious consumers (AlpTextyles, 2023). The newest layer in the repertoire of meanings of the Alps is the perception of how they are a fragile environment, threatened by the climate emergency, unlikely to survive in its current state, and therefore to be protected.

Few brands are currently communicating on this issue, perhaps because doing so might draw accusations of greenwashing, but also because communication along these lines would underscore how the ways in which consumers use the Alps are themselves unsustainable—think of the carbon footprint of transportation to winter resorts or the microplastics released into the environment by technical clothing (see case study 1 for a notable exception).



Figure 1.1 – How the Alps can connote brands

The Alps as a place brand



Symbolic association through:

- *product design*
- *marketing communications*



Case study 1: Alps – To Go?! (2022)

Documentary movie by Tom Dauer urging consumers to be part of the solutions, and not the problem



«The Alps are a place of longing. Wild, untouched, sublime – but only in our heads. Humans have been shaping and changing the Alps since time immemorial. What we see is what we have created over centuries. Nevertheless, we still tend to believe that the Alps are a counterworld. Because we wish to see them that way, we never stop reinventing their myths. Today we are at a point where we are doing more harm than good. We are in the process of destroying what we love and need. And we know that. The Alps are part of us and we are part of them. We have to take responsibility if we wish to save them. We all have to ask ourselves: “what can I do?”. More and more people are looking to the Alps as a resonant space of possible experiences. This exponential growth leads, without a doubt to conflicts of all sorts».

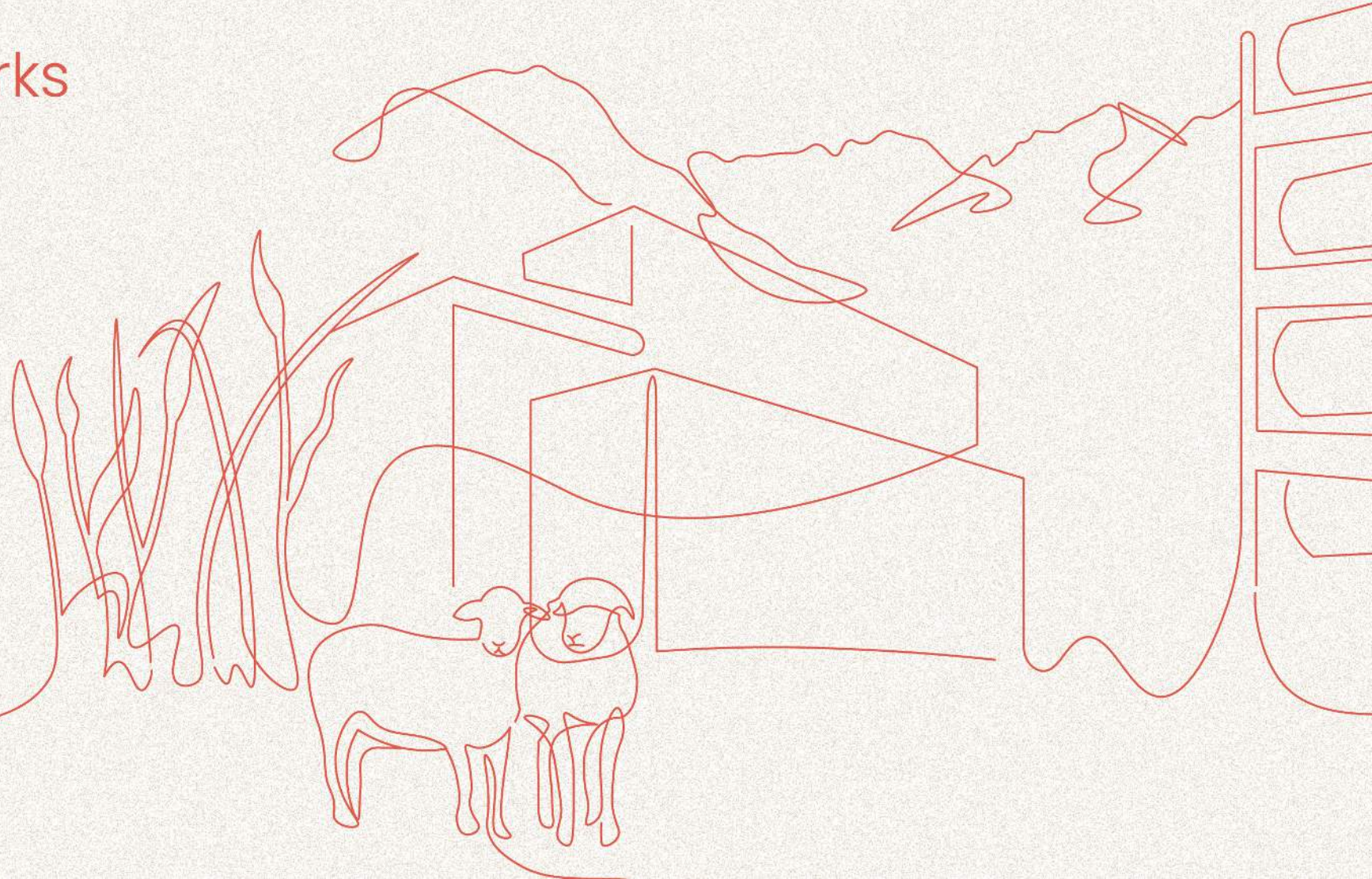
<https://ortovox.com/en/ortovox/alps-to-go>



2

Alpine references in Textile trademarks

Priority 2
Carbon neutral and resource



Introduction and methodological remarks

This section reports a systematic content analysis of references to the Alps in textile-clothing trademarks based on data from TMView, the publicly accessible trademark database maintained by the European Intellectual Property Office, which also covers trademarks from connected trademark offices from other parts of the world (<https://www.tmdn.org/tmview/#/tmview>).

Search criteria included keywords such as 'Alpin*', 'Alpen', 'Alps' and related terms in the languages of Alpine countries. The geographical scope was global. We considered only active trademarks (filed and registered).

Data gathering was initially carried out in the context of the ARPAF-III project Made in the Alps, of which emlyon business school, ZRC SAZU and Polo Poschiavo were partners. Data gathering was carried out by Olga Nechaeva (University of Florence) under the supervision of Diego Rinallo (emlyon business school). The Made in the Alps dataset covered multiple product categories and was further analyzed with a focus on textile-clothing and related value chains.



What's in a name?

Trademarks are intellectual property rights consisting of recognizable signs, designs, or expressions that distinguish a business's products or services from those of others. They ensure that products or services are easily identifiable by consumers and differentiate them from competitors.

Registering a trademark with a governmental body, such as a Trademark Office, provides legal protection and exclusive rights to use the trademark in commercial activities.

While the two terms are often used interchangeably, a trademark is not the same as a brand. A trademark offers legal protection, whereas a brand is created through marketing communication and design that facilitate positive customer experiences and generate positive functional or symbolic associations.

When initially registered, new trademarks are devoid of inherent meaning. Choosing evocative names is a means to benefit from existing cultural meanings and positive associations. By choosing trademarks containing Alpine references, companies can transfer elements from the Alpine repertoire of meanings to their brands.



Source:
<https://www.tmdn.org/tmview/#/tmview/detail/AT501991000002454>



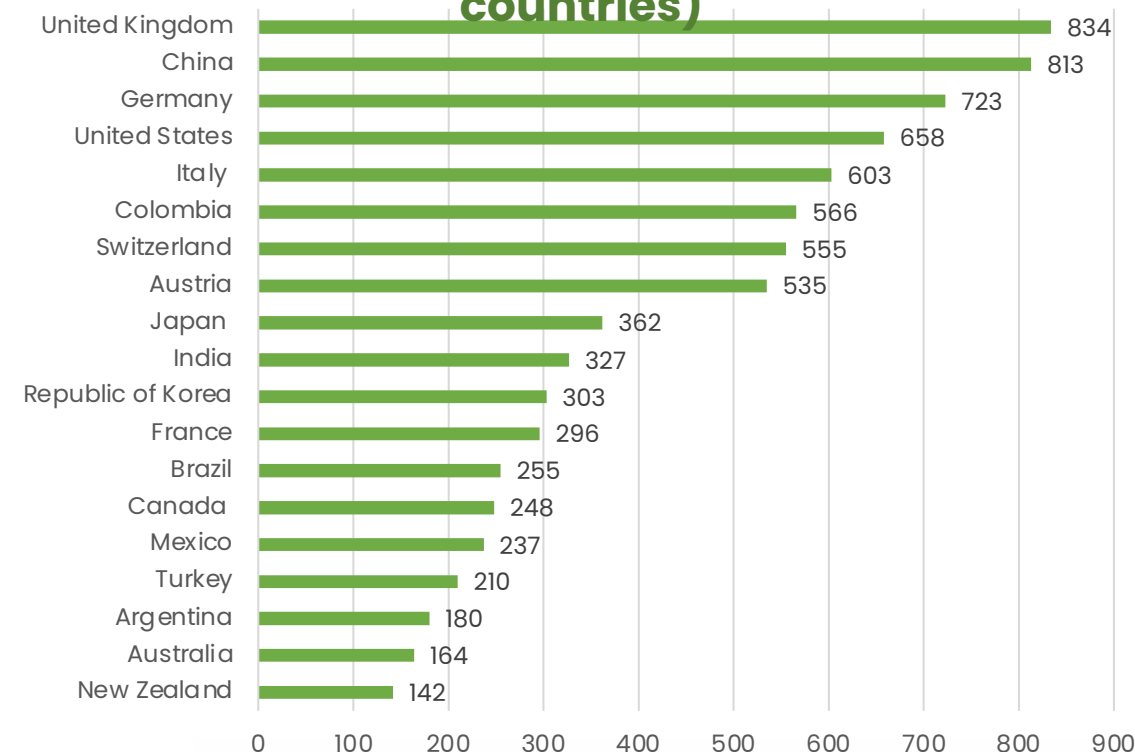
Trademarks with Alpine references are largely registered in non-Alpine countries. However, this is not always a symptom of Alpwashing.

Top countries registering trademarks containing Alpine references include the UK, China, the USA, Colombia, Japan, and India. Among Alpine countries, Germany ranks highest, followed by Italy, Switzerland, Austria, and France, with Slovenia registering fewer than 50 trademarks.

The phenomenon of "Alpinewashing," or the appropriation of the Alpine image by companies without links to the Alps, is not the sole cause of this trend. Several factors contribute to this pattern:

- Companies from Alpine regions routinely register their trademarks internationally, to protect them legally outside their country of origin. For example, many EU businesses registered their trademarks in the UK after Brexit, which explains the UK's prominence in the ranking.
- Alps-related terms are also associated with 'Alpinism', referring also to mountaineering practices in other mountain ranges.

Figure 2.2 – Geographical distribution of trademarks with Alpine references (top countries)



Source: Made in the Alps elaborations on TMVIEW data (2023)

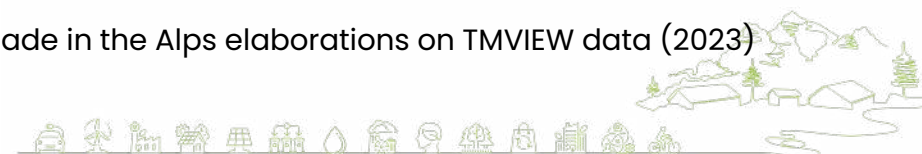
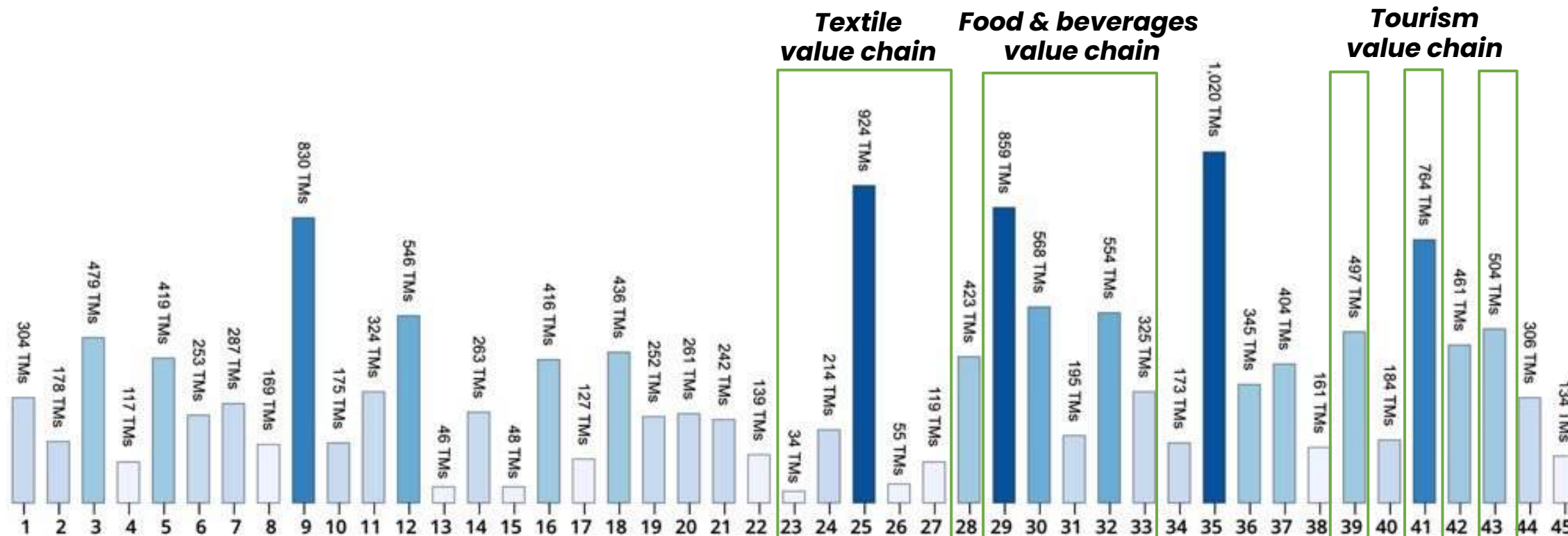


Figure 2.3 – Geographical distribution of trademarks with Alpine references (top countries)



Source: Made in the Alps elaborations on TMVIEW data (2023). Sectors refer to the Nice classification covering 34 classes of goods and 11 classes of services.

See <https://euipo.europa.eu/ec2/classheadings/?niceClassLang=en>



Discussion and conclusion

Judging from the number of trademarks containing Alps-related terms, "the Alps sell". This may be due to both the familiarity and evocative nature of the Alps compared to other mountain ranges and the fact that the term "alpinism" is often used interchangeably with mountaineering. Additionally, mountain ranges in other parts of the world are sometimes referred to as Alps (e.g., the Japanese Alps on the island of Honshu or the Southern Alps in New Zealand).

As a result, Alps-related trademarks are also registered in many non-Alpine countries (see again Fig. 2.2). This trend may be driven by the need for trademark holders from Alpine countries to secure legal protection abroad, as well as by a phenomenon of "Alpwashing," where companies with no links to the Alps use Alps-related terms.

Despite the limited prominence of textile products in the cultural associations with the Alps, we found a significant number of companies using Alps-related trademarks to promote their products. This is particularly prevalent in clothing and other end-products. For intermediate products, such as fibers, yarns, and fabrics, it appears that businesses find little advantage in using trademarks associated with the Alps.



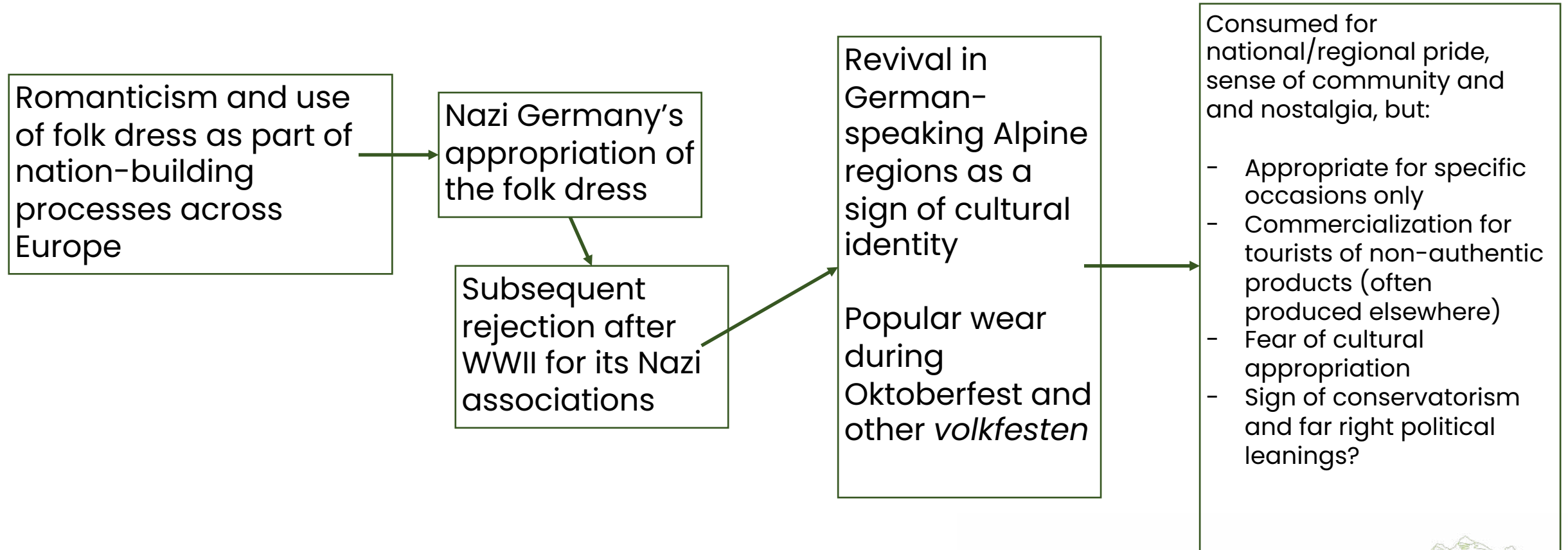
We also found that traditional clothing and technical clothing for outdoor activities and mountain sports dominate trademark Class 24. This research finding is particularly interesting when interpreted within the broader context of the history and current developments of these product categories (see Figs. 2.4 and 2.5).

In Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, folk dress has been better safeguarded than in other Alpine regions. During the 19th century, Romanticism spurred efforts to study and preserve traditional costumes, with royal courts in Bavaria and Austria adopting them to promote unity. Dirndls, in particular, became fashionable from 1870 to 1930 and spread to the USA and other countries. The Nazis used traditional German costume, particularly the dirndl, to symbolize pan-German identity and promote the image of hardworking and fertile women. After WWII, the popularity of dirndls declined due to their association with the Nazis and their conservative image, though they continued to be worn for festive occasions.

Since the 1990s, dirndls have experienced a resurgence in Austria and Bavaria, becoming popular among young people and widely available in various styles and price ranges. Traditional dress is sometimes linked to political conservatism. There is ongoing debate over whether tourists wearing dirndls is cultural appreciation or appropriation, particularly when products are made cheaply for tourists and produced outside of traditional areas.



Fig. 2.4 – Traditional costumes: historical trajectories and contemporary developments



Trademarks represent only one component of marketing communications. In this section, we have demonstrated that certain textile and clothing businesses employ Alpine references in their trademarks, likely to align themselves with the positive cultural associations linked to the Alps (see Part 1 and Fig. 1.1).

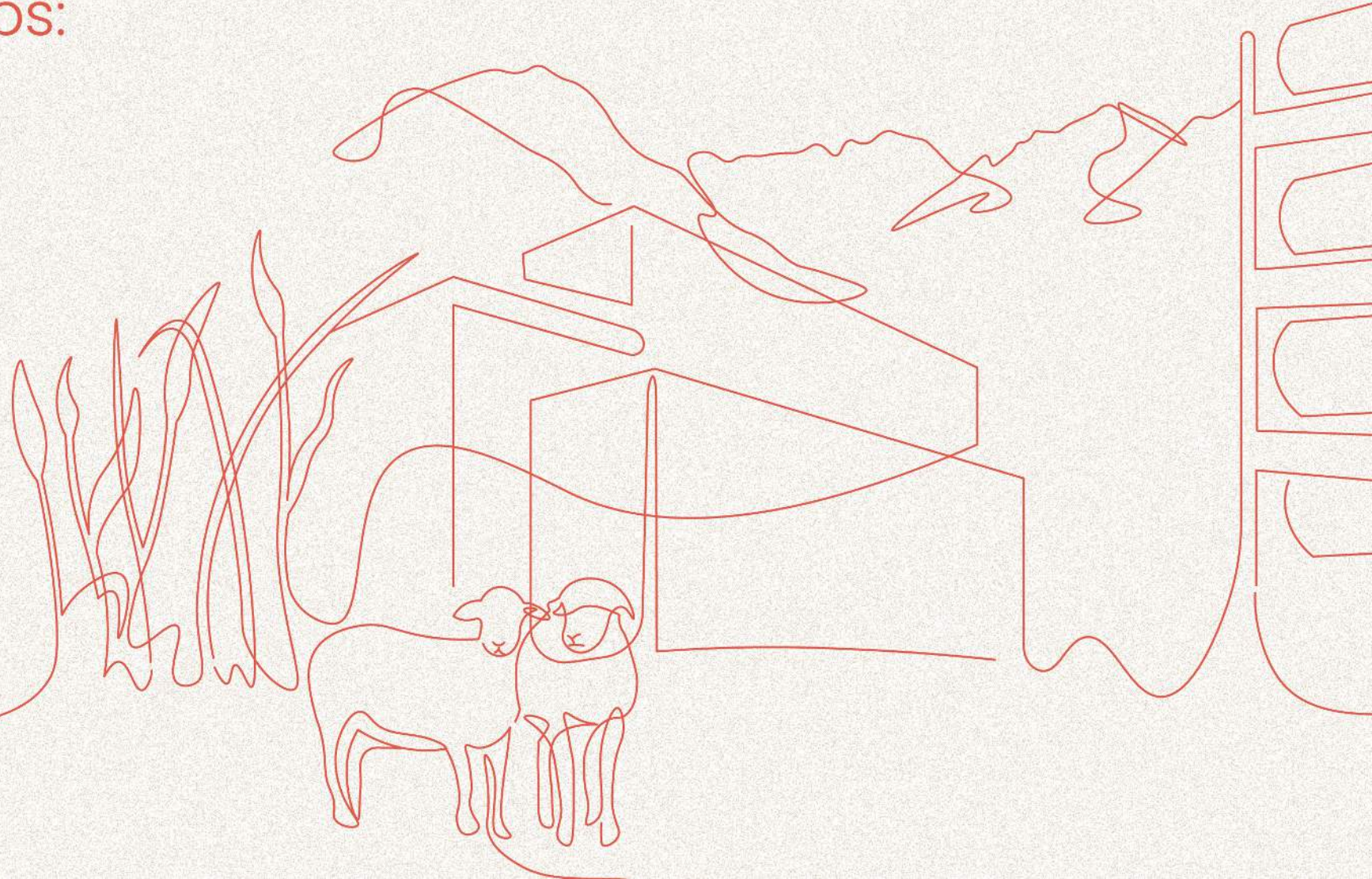
In Part 3, we will extend our analysis beyond trademarks to examine how major brands incorporate the Alps into their broader communication strategies. As evidenced by our trademark analysis, some brands with limited or no genuine connections to the Alps engage in what we refer to as "Alpwashing". Additionally, we have noted that inexpensive dirndls are sometimes imported into Alpine regions for tourist consumption, while major ski and winter sports brands, despite promoting Alpine imagery in their communications, often maintain geographically dispersed value chains that extend beyond Europe. This situation necessitates a more nuanced analysis of the brands' histories and value chains, which we will now address.



3

Brands and the Alps: Communication approaches

Priority 2
Carbon neutral and resource



Introduction

AlpTextyles

Brands strategically utilize geographic locations to imbue their products with symbolic meanings. As discussed in Part 1, the Alps possess a rich repertoire of associations, including nature, heritage and tradition, adventure and exploration, performance, as well as luxury and exclusivity. In this section, we further investigate how brands associate themselves to the Alps in their marketing communications. Our analysis reveals that some brands highlight the Alps as a place of production, while others depict Alpine landscapes a site of consumption (see Fig. 3.1).

When examining the Alps as a place of production, we found little evidence of the "100% Local" approach (Made in the Alps, 2023), which characterizes brands that assert their products are made entirely within an Alpine region using local raw materials. This approach, although present in the food and beverage sector, is ill-suited for the textile and clothing industry, where supply chains are complex and often rely on territorial specialization—sometimes on a global scale—to enhance product quality or reduce production costs.

Instead, we identified numerous brands that emphasize that the production of their goods occurs in Alpine regions, primarily utilizing imported fibers. For instance, many companies produce high-quality products using cashmere sourced from India or merino wool from New Zealand. Although less common, there are notable examples of companies that incorporate local fibers; however, these fibers are often not processed locally due to a lack of regional expertise. Finally, some companies that have relocated their production frequently emphasize in their communications that their brand heritage is tied to the Alps.



Case study 2: Rotauf, a radically Swiss brand?

Rotauf, a Swiss company located in the Canton of Graubunden, offers sustainable outdoor clothing produced as locally as possible. According to the “Swissness” legislation, a garment is considered Swiss if at least 60% of its cost is realized within the country. In a recent interview, the company declared that their Swissness percentages average around 85%. When asked if they aim for 100%, the SME’s director replied: “It’s a vision, but hardly feasible in practice. There are simply too few raw materials in Switzerland. We have neither cotton nor synthetic fibers. While there is some potential for merino wool and industrial hemp, it will take a lot of progress to see an industry emerge. In a pilot project last year, we collected just 50 kilos of Swiss merino wool. Industrial hemp cultivation is also in its infancy” (Sonderegger, 2021).

While achieving 100% Swiss-made garments may not be feasible, the company strives to maintain a supply chain that is as local as possible. Collections are designed by the internal team and developed with the assistance of specialists in Chur, the Canton’s capital, and tested in nearby mountains. Each collection is cut, sewn, knitted, and glued by Swiss factories. Rotauf makes every effort to source local raw materials when possible, supporting projects that revitalize wool, flax, hemp, or nettles, and collaborating with the few remaining Swiss fabric producers. Wool, in particular, is used as insulating filling for jackets and vests. While Rotauf’s demand for wool cannot be entirely satisfied domestically, the company sources as much Graubünden and Swiss Merino wool as possible.

This local value chain comes at a cost. Local processing, due to the high salaries of Swiss workers, is expensive, as are raw materials. For example, a Rotauf beanie made from Swiss merino wool costs 169 francs, almost twice as much as a beanie made from organic South American wool. To remain competitive with the prices of their competitors, the company adopts a direct distribution model through its online store, saving on the sales margin, which can be as high as 60%.

Justifying prices and differentiating from competitors requires effective promotion. «Our marketing is twofold. On the one hand, we present the outerwear in the Swiss mountain landscape, which arouses emotions; on the other, we tell the story of its manufacture: from which sheep does the merino wool come? Who made the jacket?»

Sources: https://www.instagram.com/rotauf_outdoor/, <https://rotauf.ch/>
Stefan Sonderegger (2021). « La croix suisse est trop agressive pour nous ». *La Vie économique*, 25 mars, <https://dievolkswirtschaft.ch/fr/2021/03/la-croix-suisse-est-trop-agressive-pour-nous/>



 BÜNDNER WOLLE
INSIDE



Figure 3.1 – Brands and the Alps: Communication models

The Alps as a place of production

Made In
Brands that produce their goods in the Alps

Fiber origin
Brands that use fibers from the Alps

Brand Origin
Brand that were founded in the Alps

The Alps as a place of consumption

The Alps as a postcard landscape



The “Made In” approach: Emphasizing where production takes place

Yarn and fabric producers in Alpine regions import fibers from the world market (AlpTextyles, 2024b). In the case of wool, this is due to the fact that textile-clothing manufacturing, concentrated in Italy, requires wool qualities that are not available in Alpine regions.

These conditions give rise to a branding approach that emphasizes local production – typically in the area where the brand was founded – while sourcing fibers internationally. Increasingly, producers with top quality or luxury positioning emphasize traceability and adherence to sustainability standards.

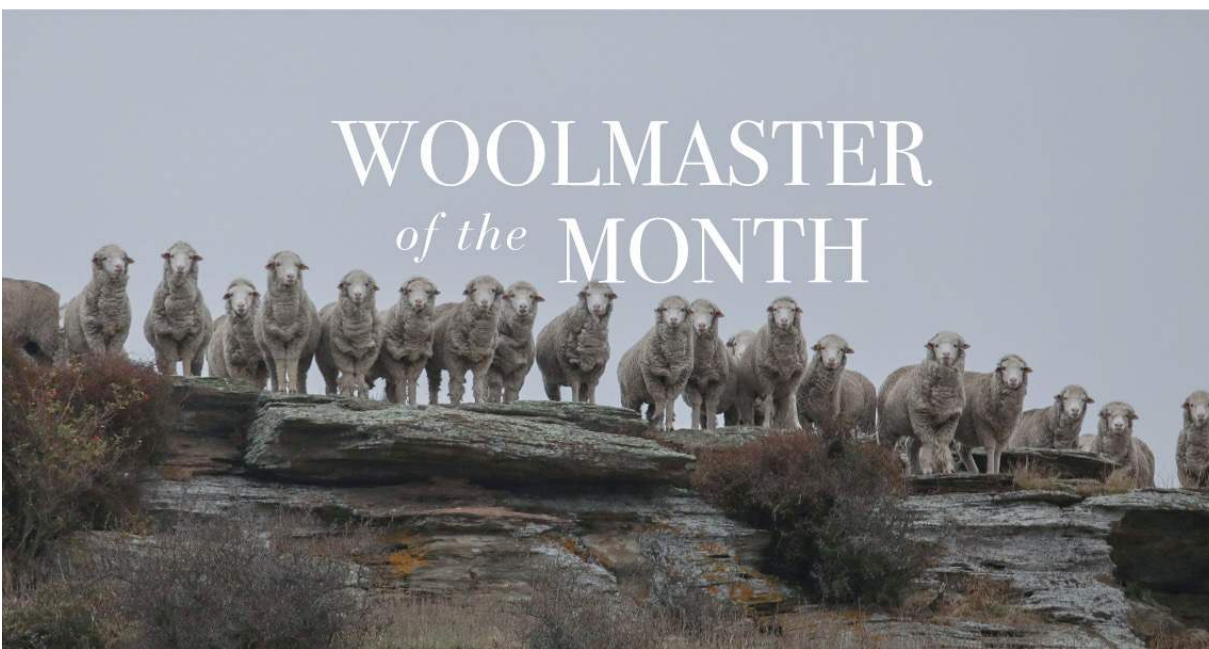
The “Made In” approach emphasizes the place of production, representing brands as rooted in the local area and benefitting from territorially embedded know-how. These brands also often highlight the excellence of the fibers they adopt.

Academic research has long shown that hybrid products that combine local know-how with high quality imported raw materials can generate favorable consumer reactions. However, the presence of high-quality local fibers could generate perceptions of Alpwashing towards brands adopting this model (AlpTextyles, 2024a).



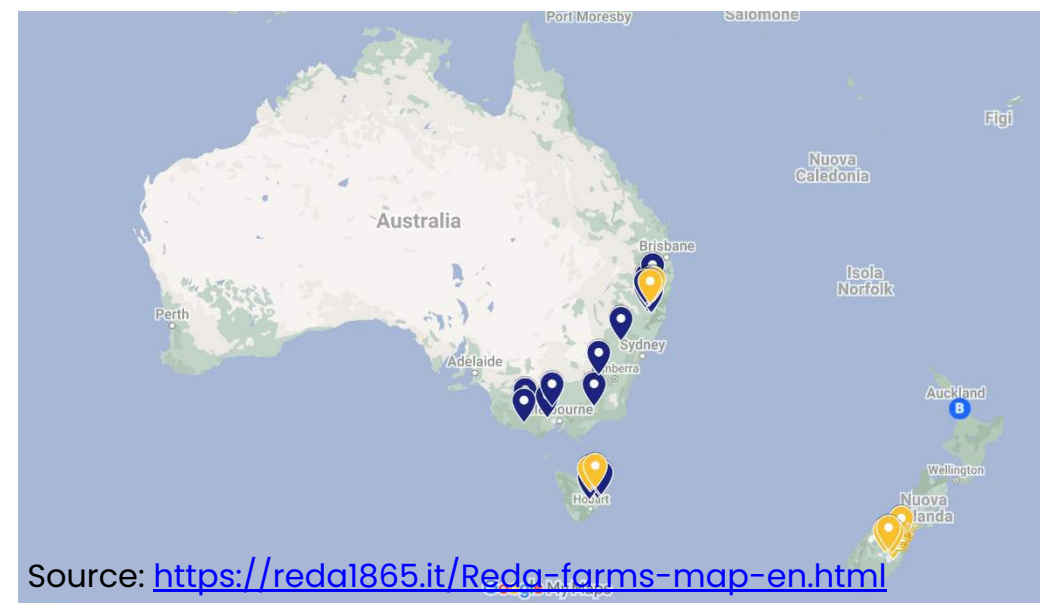
Case Study 3: Reda 1865

Reda, founded in 1865 in Valdilana (Biella, Piedmont) as a wool mill, starts acquiring high quality Australian merino wools in 1975. In 1993, the company acquires a merino sheep farm in New Zealand. To face increased demand, Reda open a new mill in the near Valle Mosso (Biella) in 1998 and acquires a new mill, Camero SpA (Vercelli) in 2018.



Source: <https://reda1865.it/matarae-woolmaster-en.html>

Reda Farms Map



Source: <https://reda1865.it/Reda-farms-map-en.html>

Despite its international expansion and product diversification, production still takes place in the company's place of origin. The company is however transparent on the origin of the wool it sources internationally, and through the series of documentaries, Woolmaster of the Month, reassures consumers of the socio-environmental sustainability of their wool sourcing practices.

The “Fiber origin” approach: Emphasizing the use and valorization of local fibers

The Alps have a rich textile heritage developed around fibers such as wool, flax, hemp, and silk. Industrialization and globalization have led to abandonment of locally produced fibers in favor of imports due to cost and quality considerations. However, various initiatives across the Alps aim to revitalize the use of local wools and increase the production of flax, hemp, and even silk for both artisanal and industrial textile use (AlpTextyles, 2024c).

The “Fiber origin” approach is adopted by brands that prioritize the use of local fibers in their production processes. Due to the complexity of textile value chains, locally sourced fibers often cannot be processed locally. For example, Swiss Flax manufactures yarns, fabrics, and clothing entirely from flax grown in Switzerland. However, only the initial pressing of flax into round bales occurs locally: the industrial breakdown of the fibers takes place in the Netherlands, and the spinning occurs in Poland before the yarns are sent back to Switzerland, due to the lack of local processing capacity.

This approach emphasizes the local origin of fibers and, in the case of wool, highlight their derivation from autochthonous or local breeds. Industrial brands utilizing local fibers might adopt this approach to underscore their local roots and support local farmers and breeds at risk of disappearing. Support to this approach comes from a recent study (AlpTextyles, 2024a, experiment #6). Participants were exposed to a product made with native wool vs. a control. The product stimuli were a blanket made with ciuta sheep wool for an Italian sample and with Arles merino wool for the French sample (N=200). We found that compared that consumers respond positively to products made with native wool, with greater purchase intent, perceived authenticity, perceived sustainability, and perceived prestige.

Case study 4a: Salewa (Alpine hemp)



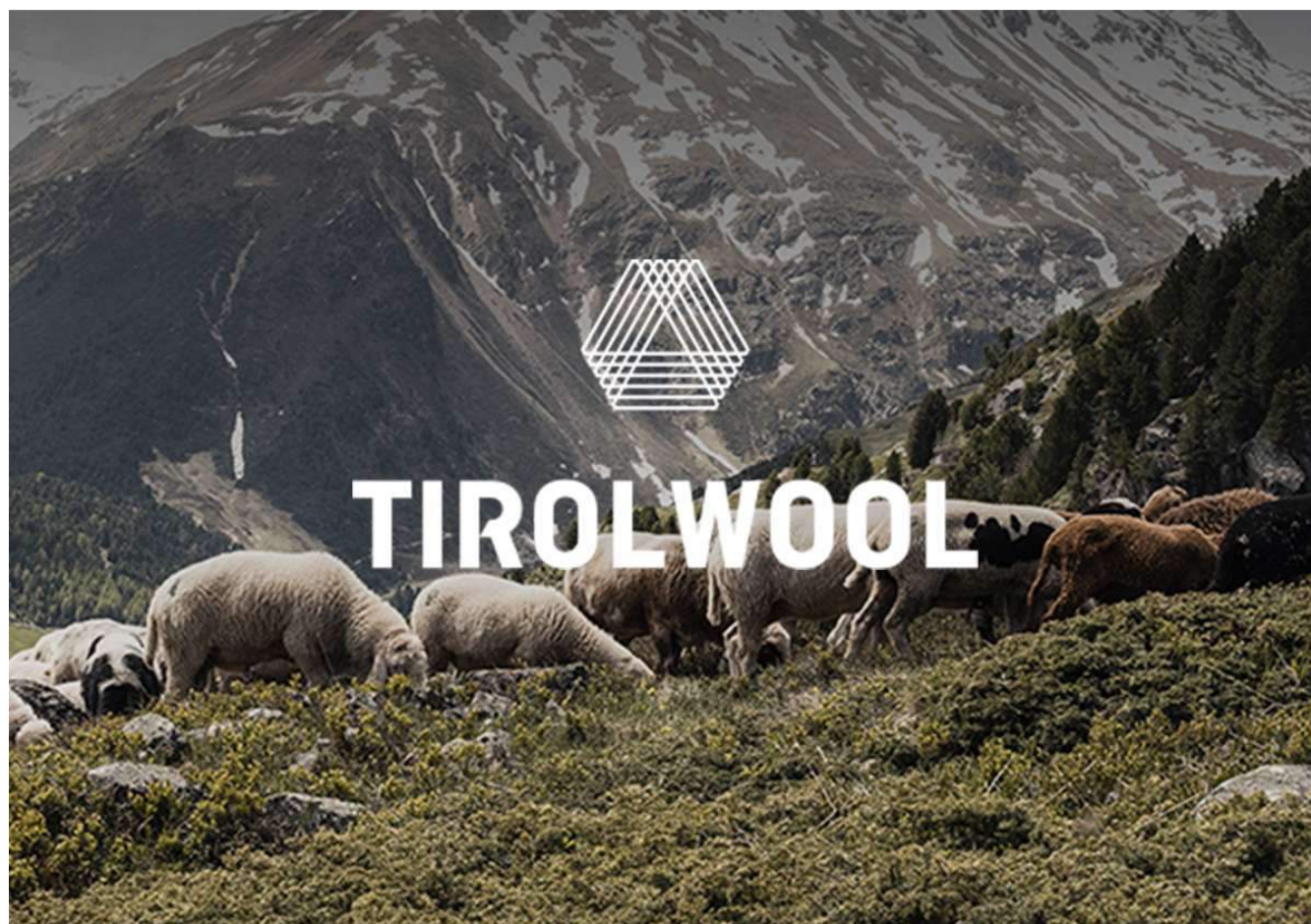
«Hemp cultivation has a long tradition in the Alps. Italy used to be the largest producer of high-quality hemp fibres. However, in the 1960s, much of the related skills, expertise and machinery were outsourced to China. This is why we purchase our hemp fibre from experienced farmers in Heilongjiang, a mountain region in north-eastern China. We invest 10% of turnover from the apparel sales of our Alpine Hemp Line into the cultivation of hemp in the alpine region, in order to promote local, sustainable and long-term development»

Sources:

<https://www.salewa.com/en-gb/alpine-hemp>
<https://thepilloutdoor.com/feature/salewa-and-alpine-hemp-with-giulia-gamba-product-manager-apparel/?lang=en>



Case study 3b: Salewa (Tyrol wool)



«For a few years now, **Salewa has also been purchasing and spinning Villnösser Brillenschaf wool**, which represents a wonderful collaboration for both parties. The wool has been incorporated into both the company's material research and development studies and into the South Tyrolean brand's products. In this way, it acts in the interests of this mountain community, to the great satisfaction and delight of the many shepherds and breeders who, in turn, bring a sense of optimism to their families and to everything related to running and managing the farmstead.

Source:

<https://www.salewa.com/made-in-south-tyrol>



Case study 5: La Roulo (Arles merino wool)

Des vêtements d'exception ! Conception



La Roulo brand, a collaboration between Maison de la Transhumance, the Naturfasern Michael Dal Grande company and a collective of transhumant shepherds, was created with the goal of giving value to the wool of the Merino d'Arles sheep, which is widespread in southeastern France and is the finest in the Alps. After shearing, the greasy wool is transported to Biella where it is washed, combed, carded and spun. For skin contact products such as t-shirts and leggings, the wool is combined with the finer merino wool from the Falkland Islands. Finished products are made in Biella (sweaters and jackets), Troyes in France (socks), and Baden-Wurtemberg in southern Germany (t-shirts). This largely alpine supply chain makes it possible to properly value and remunerate the work of the breeders.



The “Brand Origin” approach: Emphasizing the place where the brand was founded

Faced with increased global competition, many brands have relocated their value chains, shifting production away from their places of origin. A notable example is global fashion brands, which maintain their headquarters, creative activities and promotional showcases in Paris, Milan, and other fashion capitals, while the majority of their collections are manufactured offshore.

Emphasizing the brand’s place of origin allows companies to benefit from the positive territorial associations and divert attention from the fact that most production is no longer local. This strategy helps shield brands from rising consumer concerns regarding globalized value chains. While most companies provide transparency about their supply chains through corporate websites and sustainability reports, their communication campaigns targeting consumers often highlights the brands’ heritage. This approach appeals to consumers’ emotions by leveraging a brand’s past achievements, tradition, longevity, and established reputation, thereby building trust and sense of authenticity.



Case Study 6: Moncler

a. Brand Origin in Grenoble, France, as a sport brand



Founded in 1952 in Monestier-de-Clermont, near Grenoble, with a production of sleeping bags. The first down jackets were designed to protect the company's workers from the cold. A French alpinist, Lionel Terray, asked the company to make jackets for his expeditions, leading to the first complete line of down jackets, gloves, salopettes, and sleeping bags.



In 1954 Moncler equipped the Italian expedition to K2. This contributed to the brand's awareness and image as a sport brand.



After many sponsorships further reinforcing the association between the brand and mountain sports, Moncler became the official supplier to the French downhill ski team during the Grenoble Winter Olympic Games in 1968.



b. Transformation into a luxury fashion brand

In the 1980s, Parisian designer Chantal Thomass started a collaboration with Moncler, revolutionizing the down jacket for city use by substituting zippers with buttons and adding fur trims, satin, and reversible materials. The initial adopters of these redesigned Moncler down jackets were the youth of the Milanese upper class, wealthy teenagers from affluent backgrounds known as the Paninari. This subculture was recognized by their distinctive attire, with the vibrant Moncler down jacket being an essential piece of their wardrobe.

In 1992, Moncler was purchased by the Italian fashion group Pepper Industries. Following a period of financial crisis, in 2003 the brand was acquired by the Italian entrepreneur Remo Ruffini, who guided a strategy of internal expansion of Moncler into the luxury fashion market with new product lines, including incursions into haute couture and collaborations with various designers providing their creative interpretations of the brand.



d. Moncler Grenoble: Promoting the brand's heritage

As the brand highlights on its website, Moncler was born in the mountains. Born to protect, to keep warm». Today, three product lines interpret the brand's DNA in different manners. Moncler Collections (men's, women's and kids' products) emphasize style. Grenoble Genius is based on collaborations with designers that re-interpret the brand creatively. Moncler Grenoble emphasize the brand's heritage by targeting sporty consumers interested in performance, design and innovation.

As the brand highlights on its website, "Moncler was born in the mountains. Born to protect, to keep warm». Today, three product lines embody the brand's DNA in distinct ways. Moncler Collections (men's, women's, and kids' products) emphasize style. Grenoble Genius is based on collaborations with designers who creatively reinterpret the brand. Moncler Grenoble emphasizes the brand's heritage by targeting sporty consumers interested in performance, design, and innovation.

Moncler Grenoble was launched in New York in 2010, with a vision to reinterpret the styles of the past to create technical skiing garments and après-ski wear with a contemporary take. Fall/winter collections are split into 3 sub-lines: *High Performance* («products guaranteeing maximum performance»), *Performance & Style* («for the sporty consumers who also care about design»), and *Après-Ski* («style with a sporting edge»). The spring/summer collection emphasize «functionality and style».

Launched in New York in 2010, Moncler Grenoble reinterprets past styles to create technical skiing garments and après-ski wear with a contemporary twist. The fall/winter collections are divided into three sub-lines: High Performance («guaranteeing maximum performance»), Performance & Style (for sporty consumers who also care about design), and Après-Ski (style with a sporting edge). The spring/summer collection emphasizes "functionality and style." In December 2023, the brand opened its first Moncler Grenoble flagship store in St. Moritz, Switzerland. This was followed by a spectacular fashion show in February 2024 held in the woods, which received highly positive reviews despite local concerns about its environmental impact.



Source:

<https://www.monclergroup.com/en/brands/moncler>



The Alps as a postcard landscape for consumption

Through their communication activities, brands can establish consumer associations to iconic locations. This is common for brands associated with the Alps, which often showcase consumers wearing or using their products against the backdrop of Alpine landscapes. However, this approach is also employed by brands without any direct connection to the Alps (see Fig. 3.1).

As the Alps became a popular holiday destination for the wealthy and famous, marketing communications adapted accordingly. Over generations, fashion creators—from Parisian couturiers during the two world wars to ready-to-wear designers from various fashion capitals—have depicted the stunning Alpine landscapes in their promotional materials. Today, brands use magazine advertisements, fashion shows, and social media posts to leverage the Alps, creating associations with nature, adventure, technical performance, and/or luxury, depending on their positioning. This also includes brands whose production occurs entirely elsewhere.



Case study 7: The Chanel Fall/Winter 2019/20 ready-to-wear show

AlpTextyles



From a review: «[T]he House created a wintry village with a lovely backdrop of mountains as a setting for the Fall/Winter 2019–2020 runway show [in Paris]. Entitled “CHANEL in the Snow”, it was truly a remarkable experience immersing showgoers into what could only be described as a wintry getaway in the deep-end of fashion. The show kick-started with an emotional moment of silence to pay tribute to the late Lagerfeld, followed by the resounding voice of the designer talking about fashion. The collection itself included a new facet in CHANEL’s already adored and established codes – think houndstooth ensembles, plaid wool trousers, matching maxi coats, warm knits and fedoras. There were organza blouses elegantly lying atop of button-down shirts and the pieces featured intricate details recalling the theme: golden embellishments in the form of snowflakes, white fur in ode to the snow and necklaces and earrings shaped like snow. Leather ensembles, “Christmas sweaters” and snow-boots were also part of the deal...»
<https://www.azyamode.com/en/chanel-fall-winter-2019-2020-ready-to-wear>

Video available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=dml2ITC4oto>



Case Study 8: The Prada Linea Rossa ski Fall/Winter 2021 campaign



Press Release

Milan, 16th November 2021 – Gus Kenworthy, champion freestyle skier, philanthropist and prominent LGBTQI+ figure and Julia Marino, snowboarder, gold-medal winner in the 2017 X Games and actively involved on the women and youth empowerment front, both showcase the Fall/Winter 2021 Prada Linea Rossa ski collection. Captured in still images and a filmic short directed by Matt Pain, the two protagonists engage in a fierce battle across the slopes, a race between skier and snowboarder on their shared winter terrain. Their competition, however, harks back to the original root of that word – competere, ‘to strive for.’ Not a rivalry, but a sparring match, an urging of one another to push further and achieve. The ethos of champions, the attainment of excellence synonymous with Linea Rossa – a line to cross, to conqueror.

[HTTPS://WWW.PRADAGROUP.COM/EN/NEWS-MEDIA/NEWS-SECTION/PRADA-LINEA-ROSSA-SKI-FW-2021.HTML](https://www.pradagroup.com/en/news-media/news-section/prada-linea-rossa-ski-fw-2021.html)



Case Study 9: DIORALPS capsule skiwear collection (November 2022)



Video available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dILHnNxV35M>

From the Dior Youtube channel:

DIORALPS CAPSULE

An ode to getting away and the magic of the mountains, the DiorAlps collection dreamed up by Maria Grazia Chiuri unfurls an unprecedented wardrobe. One piece ski-suits, down jackets and matching pants – made in special water-repellant fabric – embellished with Mizza leopard print or Dior Oblique, while other ensembles are unveiled in blue, white, gray and red. An exclusive line, promising a daring winter look.



Case study 10: Giorgio Armani Neve (St. Moritz fashion show, December 2022)



Giorgio Armani Reboots His Neve Skiwear Label in St. Moritz

With the slopes of St. Moritz as his backdrop, Giorgio Armani breathed new life into his skiwear business with a runway show in the snow on Saturday. Some 300 guests—including *Emily in Paris*'s Lucas Bravo, model-turned-actor Pepe Barroso, and legendary socialite Nati Abascal—looked on as the 88-year-old designer reclaimed territory he first entered in 1985. These days it's big bucks: alongside Armani, both Louis Vuitton and Emilio Pucci were promoting ski-oriented capsule collections this weekend in St. Moritz, where every snow-covered street is studded with fashion boutiques from Prada to Hermès, all featuring window displays dedicated to the alpine wardrobe. Armani relaunched Neve—the Italian word for snow—four years ago after he had success with his sportswear line E7. In a contemporary fashion landscape where city and performance wardrobes cross-pollinate, skiwear-inspired fashion is a gold vein. “What makes Neve different is the balance of performance and style, and the span of the offer, which is dedicated both to skiing and après ski,” the designer said before the show, which took place in a decidedly Armani-fied wooden box in front of St. Moritz's circa 1928 Olympic stadium. “You won't find bright colors in it, and the selection is not limited to technical fabrics.” (Anders Christian Madsen, December 11, 2022; <https://www.vogue.com/article/giorgio-armani-reboots-his-neve-skiwear-label-in-st-moritz>)

Video available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7BHPKI2nvY>

Conclusion

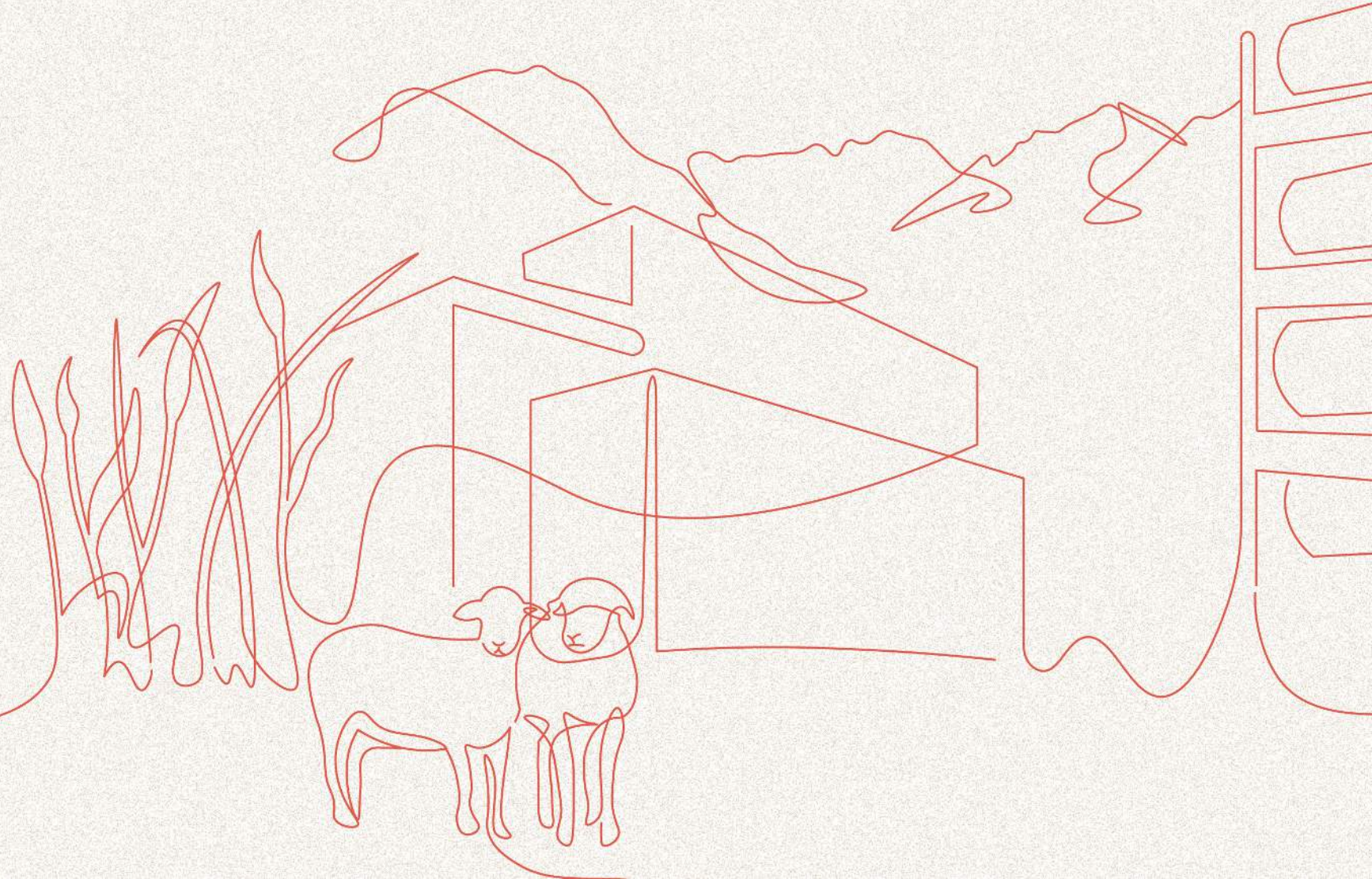
In this section we reviewed the primary communication approaches used by brands that associate themselves with the Alps to leverage their cultural meanings related to nature, exploration and adventure, heritage and tradition, technical performance, and luxury. Depending on their history and the current location of their supply chains, brands can depict the Alps as a place of production based on the 'Made In', 'Fiber Origin', or 'Brand Origin' models discussed earlier.

Brands without productive connections to the Alps can still capitalize on the region's image by portraying consumption against the backdrop of the Alps' stunning landscapes. This does not constitute Alpwashing, as these brands do not claim their products are made in the Alps. However, brands with stronger Alpine roots might emphasize their deeper connections to the region in their communications to distinguish themselves from those leveraging the Alpine image through consumer associations only.



Alpine crafts: communication challenges

Priority 2
Carbon neutral and resource



Introduction

Compared to their industrial counterparts, crafts textile producers face additional promotional challenges due to their high production costs and prices, which are difficult to justify to consumers who might not distinguish between handmade and machine-made products. Most craft producers are small or even micro-enterprises, and they often lack the time, resources, and marketing skills necessary to build successful brands. Furthermore, unlike food and beverages, which are readily associated with the Alps, textile products are not 'top of mind' in consumers' perceptions (AlpTextyles, 2024a).

On the positive side, research by AlpTextyles (2024a) indicates that the Alps possess a romantic image that benefits traditional craft products, which are perceived as environmentally and culturally friendly. Experimental studies shows that handmade products 'made in the Alps' are more attractive and perceived as more imbued with symbolic love than their machine-made counterparts (experiment #3). The prospect of buying these products also result in greater anticipated glow (feeling good about oneself for engaging in a prosocial behavior) and social worth (perceiving oneself as an individual valued by society). Therefore, artisans have some tools in their arsenal to differentiate themselves and win over consumers.



Source: www.tessanda.ch



Made in the Alps... but often not with local fibers

Considering the communication approaches discussed in Part 3, craftsmen and craftswomen in the Alpine regions are heirs to a living tradition passed down through generations. It is crucial to highlight their role in a heritage community rooted in the rich textile legacy of the Alps and to emphasize the fact that their production takes place locally.

Unlike industrial textile and apparel companies that have relocated part of their production, these artisanal enterprises are deeply rooted in the area where they have developed, with production processes entirely 'made in' the region.

In most cases, however, artisan enterprises produce fabrics using yarns from imported fibers, often natural and of excellent quality, leading, for example, to hand-woven garments but with Australian merino wool. Even for artisan enterprises there is nonetheless the possibility of using local fibers, as was common in the past. By doing so, they can engage in storytelling that justifies high prices through an image of authenticity and territorial rootedness.



Source: www.tessanda.ch



Case study 10: Les Tisserands (Valgrisenche, Aosta Valley, IT)



The cooperative was founded in 1969 under the name of "Draps" and became Les Tisserands in 1983, while keeping intact its objective of safeguarding and promoting the art of loom weaving of the Drap of Valgrisenche. From the typical Drap, the cooperative has diversified its products to adapt to fashion trends and market needs. Thanks to cooperation with some local breeders, today the cooperative predominantly uses sheep's wool of the native Rosset breed, thus contributing to the project of safeguarding, rediscovering and enhancing the breed. The collaboration, started in 2001, has resulted in a variety of products that valorize the characteristics of the rosset wool, such as rustic fabrics for furnishing and mountain clothing.

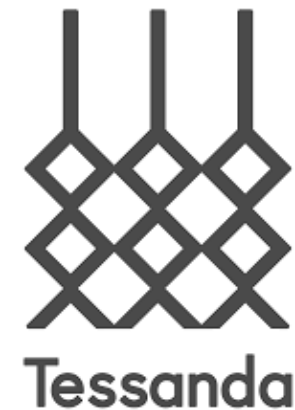


Source:
<https://www.lestisserands.it/>



Case study 11: Tessanda (Val Müstair, CH)

Once traditional in Val Müstair, flax cultivation had long been interrupted until recently when the Bioshere Val Müstair, in the context of a programme to promote biodiversity in the valley, revived it. Tessanda, one of the few remaining artisanal weaving workshops in Switzerland, is currently playing a central role in this project. An element of this initiative has been the design and production of an iconic product, the *sac da merenda* (picnic bag), handmade with yarns from SwissFlax GmbH, a company that is rebuilding the flax/linen value chain in Switzerland. While the flax grown in Val Müstair is currently not enough to be transformed into yarn, sales from *sac da merenda* (price = CHF 118) support the reintroduction of flax cultivation in the Valley, since Tessanda donate CHF 8 to the project.



Source: <http://www.tessanda.ch>



Creating an emotional link to craftsmen and craftswomen

Products do not speak for themselves; the stories behind them play a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions. In an era where consumers often lack familiarity with artisanal production methods, highlighting the passionate craftsmanship of artisans can forge a meaningful emotional connection, thereby enhancing the symbolic value of products.

One effective strategy for achieving this connection is through narrative labels that feature images and quotes from the artisans themselves. For instance, Tessanda in Val Müstair, Switzerland, has developed labels that showcase the weavers behind their products. One such label features weaver Nino, accompanied by her poignant statement: “I don’t weave, I make music with my thoughts.” This approach not only personalizes the product but also invites consumers to engage with the artistry and intent.

This strategy can also be effectively employed by individual textile artisans. Examples from various Alpine regions illustrate how small-scale craftswomen and craftsmen can similarly leverage narrative storytelling to connect with consumers. By emphasizing the unique stories and skills of individual artisans, these producers can enhance the perceived value of their work and foster a deeper appreciation among consumers.

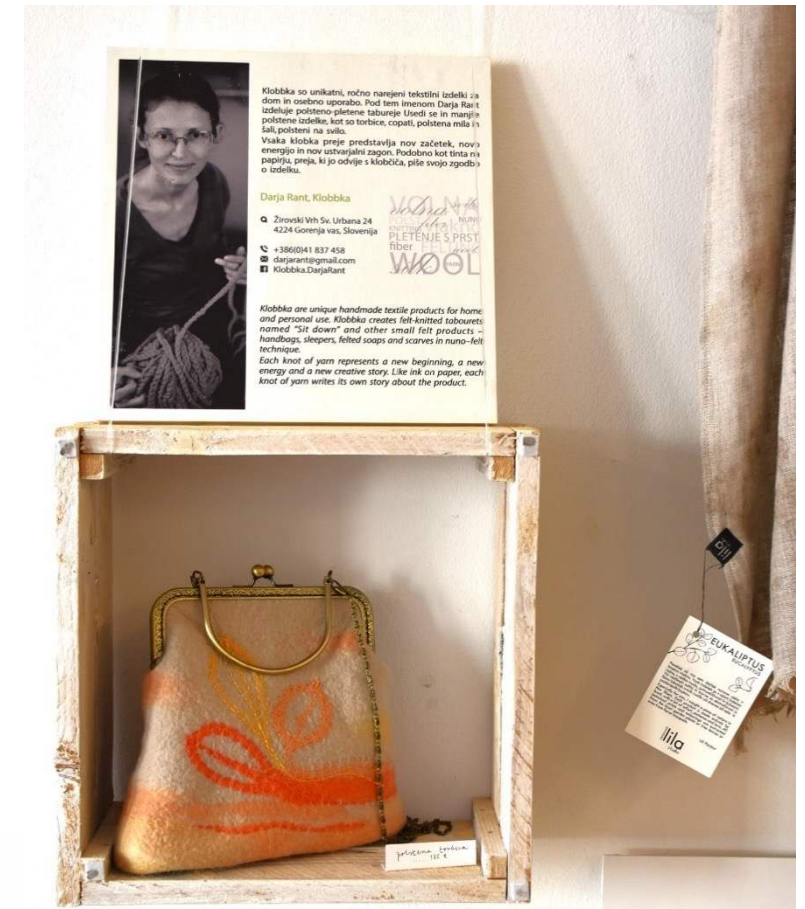


Photo: Diego Rinaldo.
Product: <http://www.tessanda.ch>



Case study 12: The Arts & Crafts Centre DUO in Škofja Loka (SL)

The Arts & Crafts Centre in Škofja has adopted a storytelling approach to promote the local craftspeople. Inside their centrally located stores, products are shown with accompanying promotional material including the picture and biographical elements of the artisans who made them. The center's website also features a section, titled 'Masters of Crafts', with portraits of artisans and contact information. Another section, 'Handicrafts Experiences', allow visitors to reserve meetings and workshops with these artisans.



Source:
<https://www.centerduo.eu/en/>



Showing the time that it takes to produce textile crafts

Consumers are often unaware of the extensive time required to produce artisanal products. An experimental study conducted by AlpTextyles (2024; experiment #3) indicates that consumers intuitively recognize that handmade textile products take longer to produce than machine-made items. Despite this, most would be astonished by the actual time investment involved in crafting textile goods.

In a pilot action by AlpTextyles in Valposchiavo, Switzerland, aimed at raising awareness about the traditional blanket known as the coperta poschiavina, we collected detailed production time data from Tessitura Valposchiavo, one of the three remaining weaving workshops in Switzerland. This data was creatively visualized in our promotional material to highlight the labor-intensive process involved in creating these blankets.

Consumers were particularly surprised to learn that producing these blankets demands 253 hours of expert labor. The process begins with warping, which takes 14 hours, followed by 21 hours to mount the threads on the loom, 12 hours to thread the healds, and an additional 16 hours to further prepare the threads and loom. The actual weaving of 34 meters of fabric requires 175 hours, with final touches and sewing taking another 12 hours. Although many consumers still perceive the blanket's price (CHF 672 per meter, or CHF 1700 per blanket) as high, they now have a deeper understanding and appreciation of the extensive time required for its production.



LA COPERTA POSCHIAVINA

I NUMERI DELLA PRODUZIONE

COPERTA POSCHIAVINA ARANCIONE

Tessuto su telaio largo	180 cm	Ore di lavoro per realizzare la coperta	
Larghezza stoffa	150 cm		
Lunghezza stoffa	34 m		
8 fili al cm		Ordire	14 ore
Totale 1276 fili		Montare i fili sull' telaio	21 ore
		Infilare fili nei licci	12 ore
		Infilare fili nel pettine	3 ore
Ordire		Preparazione fili e telaio	16 ore
Lana merino 100%		Tessere	175 ore
Colori arancione / blu / verde		Lavori finali	10 ore
Quantità di materiale 17 kg		Totale	251 ore
		Cucire una coperta	2 ore
Trama			
Lana merino 100%			
Colori marrone			
Quantità di materiale 13 kg			

*L'ordire è stato preparato da Jessica
La stoffa è stata tessuta da Pia*

Prezzi

Un metro — 672 fr.

Coperta piccola
150 cm & 190 cm — 1550 fr.

Coperta grande
150 cm & 220 cm — 1700 fr.

VALPOSCHIAVO
FESTA DE LO PAN NER
2023



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ALPTEXTYLES

INTERTWINING CULTURES

AlpTextyles is an Interreg Alpine Space project that gathers the heritage of Alpine textile ecosystems to develop collaborative business and cultural solutions toward a circular and sustainable textile industry.

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www.alpine-space.eu/project/alptextyles

