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Authors' short biography

PhD candidate in architecture in a joint programme between the University of Liège (BE) and Politecnico di Milano (IT), Chiara Caravello has a training background in architecture with a focus on post-industrial architectures and landscapes' regeneration. She is currently carrying out her research on former underground quarries and extractive landscapes in the Euregio Meuse-Rhine cross-border area.

Title

'One hour you are in Switzerland, and the next in Italy'

Keywords

landscape continuity; collective imagination; border resilience

Abstract (282 / max. 300 words)

In 1871, the traveler Browne described the 'geographical lines' of the picturesque landscape between northern Italy and Switzerland as 'very puzzling, especially as regards boundaries' (Browne, 1871), claiming that it was impossible to grasp the transition between one country and the other. With all evidence, he had no internet issues.

Nowadays in Europe, the border is sensibly palpable, its presence can be anticipated up to a few kilometers before reaching it. Indeed, among what makes the passage become tangible are, paradoxically, the intangible infrastructures, data networks and "deeply subsoil interventions" underlying the processes of "urbanization of the subsurface" (Kissling & Bonsack, 2020).

The border - at first a mark drawn on the map, invisible in the geographical and spatial experience of the place - becomes tangible when discontinuous services are offered by different and heterogeneous territorial development approaches, disrupting the natural landscape continuity.

To provide useful points for further consideration about the Alpine borderscapes by taking a distance from its dominant geomorphological features, the presentation offers a comparison with a non-alpine borderscape. Through a transdisciplinary approach, the intervention aims to reveal the potential of the border as a space of resilience (Luperca, 2020) given by the inter-action between different territorial management practices and different interpretations in the collective imagination (Hagerman, 2020).

The proposed case study is the 'Three Countries Park' project area, at the core of the Euregio Meuse-Rhine (BE-NL-DE). Here, as in the Alpine landscape, cross-border countries have experienced similar economic and social developing, drawing on the same territorial resources. Today, building on the recognition of this history based on a shared landscape, local stakeholders are teaming up to tackle the current ecological crisis and move together towards sustainable territorial development.

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