

Introduction Andorra Workshop Presentation

In the 2004, George Steiner was invited to the Nexus Instituut of Tilburg to lecture on the idea of Europe. His statement developed the notion that all abstract ideas need to be somehow anchored to substantial realities. Hence, he explained how Europe, as a concept, could be characterized by 5 items to be repeatably found throughout all European territory:

- 1its historic cafes, from Kierkegaard's in Copenhagen to Pessoa's in Lisbon
- 2the name of European streets, always devoted to authors, scientist, philosophers as *lieux de la memoire*
- 3its genius in music, mathematics and speculative thinking
- 4a certain pessimism or sense of the upcoming END
- 5and my favorite: its geographic measures allowing walkable distances.

Europe has been shaped on a human scale and its horizons have always encouraged to travel by walk, in all directions across the European territory. From the pilgrims in the middle ages, to the contemporary massive migration itineraries.

This walkability characterizes the continent and its inhabitants specific relation to landscape. Our common landscapes are basically anthropic: no deserts or badlands or tundras scattering us apart. Europe is basically a continuous series of "small scale" cultural landscapes we have inherited from our ancestors.

Being landscape, as described, an active continuous heritage shared by Europeans; the mere concept of border (limit, division, ending) may seem dissonant. European borders among neighboring countries have changed through time and will surely continue to change, encompassing Nations and States politic and economical "raise and falls".

However, after centuries of shifting unstable political limits shaped by blood and time, the "scars" of European borders are after all more symbolical than physical. The powerful palimpsest of cultural landscapes overcomes state fences and walls, militarist customs and national policies.

Physical borders are betrayed by the continuity of urban, agricultural or coastal landscapes. In our globalized context, no State is powerful enough to defend its national preferred values in its own territory confronting the aspirations of the "outsiders". As Zygmunt Bauman quoted in his text *Europe, an unfinished adventure*, the destiny of freedom and democracy in each country has to be now solved and framed in the global scenario.

European contemporary borders, as symbolical limits, are however key to us, because they define European Identity. Our symbolic borders remind us of the "tragic lesson" Europe has learned after centuries of wars (for religion, race, ethnics, tribal) as extension of politics. This lesson has led to contemporary transnational public order and to understanding Europe as Community of Values, as described in the Charter for European Identity approved on the 8th October 1995 on the 41st Congress in Lübeck.

But, could we define a typology of European Cross-border Landscapes?

Until now, we have concluded European Cross-border landscapes are walkable, human scale limits, (promoting specialized tourism: pilgrimage, hiking, biking...) mainly surrounded by cultural landscape and more defined by their intangible values than by their geographical ones (for instance memorials, monuments, architectural and infrastructural heritage).

We have also decrypted a certain iconography related to the State definition (custom, military services, variable taxes rate related economy) and other characteristics related to the proliferation of the global liberalism economy (outlets, parking lots).

Landscape characterized by various of those elements at a time, would therefore be categorized as European Cross-border Landscapes. A complex iconography basically integrated by morphological items related to:

1the commercial activity (from twin cities to commercial outlet strip cities mostly inhabitant by EU border commuters),

2specific infrastructural requirements (bridges and tunnels in political and geographical borders or concerning stationary mobility intensity and parking)

3political limits delimitation needs (build environment related to border definition form walls, fences, beacons, customs structures, military housing, signs and markers),

4the symbolism of the signaling system of memorials, location of past events, toponymy relation to site description.

We have until now defined a typology of European Cross-border Landscapes. Nevertheless the milestone of this intervention is to frame how this Cross-border Landscapes would help to the building up of the European contemporary identity. The construction of a collective identity emerged from a theoretical (some would define as Utopia) speculative thinking of an abstract concept. But this idea is nowadays increasingly real in all aspects of European life from social to economical and has furthermore a physical consequence on the European cross border built environment.

Our responsibility for the future, as planners and landscape architects, are to define, intervene and manage the particular challenges of this cross border territories.

On one hand we need to innovate regarding the tools and strategies of the cross border landscape planning enhancing new dynamic of trans national cooperation.

On the other hand, in a more detailed approach:

1we need to work on the mitigation of specialization and stationary activities,

2improve the diversification of commercial and leisure activities,

3reassessing of cultural heritage and identity factors for a meaning build up symbolism

4enhance the walkability and quality of the historic "pedestrian" borders

5and improving the quality of the urban and periurban landscapes.

Overall, a huge responsibility has been placed to all of us as Europeans and active agents for the future to be of the European Cross-border Landscapes. An enormous responsibility we have faced, for starter in Pas de la Casa in this international workshop.

