

DEAR LANDSCAPE

Theses Paper (DRAFT)

Landscape Quality Objectives for the Three Countries Park

Anja Brüll [Three Countries Park], Remy Kroese, Marlies Vermeulen [Dear Hunter]

Introduction

The European Landscape Convention (ELC) of the Council of Europe calls upon its parties (member states) to set landscape quality objectives within the realm of landscape policies. "Landscape quality objective" means, for a specific landscape, the formulation by the competent public authorities of the aspirations of the public with regard to the landscape features of their surroundings" (Art.1c). Public consultation and landscape perception are thus essential ingredients for landscape governance. Furthermore, - as landscapes extend beyond national borders - the ELC asks its parties to encourage territorial cooperation for transfrontier landscapes on a local and regional level (Art.9). It is in this light that the Three Countries Park and the project partners initiated and conducted the Dear Landscape project, supported by the People to People – Interreg VA Programm of the Euregio Meuse Rhine (EMR).

In the partner regions of the Three Countries Park a lot of knowledge about the landscape(s) has already been assembled by various institutions and organisations. But how citizens experience their surroundings, what value they attach to their landscape and which places and characteristics they appreciate is not yet well known. However, this is an essential knowledge that can have a major influence on (cross-border) policies on landscape protection, landscape and spatial planning as well as territorial and project development.

In order to better reflect this in a cross-border approach, the "Dear Landscape" project used the special research method of the architects' group "Dear Hunter" [the authors Marlies Vermeulen and Remy Kroese]: Through living and working on site, we were able to gain first-hand knowledge in direct contact with the inhabitants. This resulted in various subjective local maps and an "atlas" of the cross-border area as perceived by residents and visitors and observed and interpreted by us. This paper reflects these findings in order to discuss possible landscape quality objectives for the Three Countries Park and its partner regions.

‘Soil samples’ of landscape perception

Certainly this anthropological method of living and working on site is a very local approach which cannot cover the whole territory of the Euregio Meuse-Rhine (EMR). Rather, the project was an experiment that took place at 6 very different locations in the EMR along the borders:

- *Island of Lanaye, Commune de Visé, B-Wallonia*
- *Drielandenpunt, Gemeente Vaals, NL*
- *Kasteel van Heers, Gemeente Heers, B-Flanders*
- *Old Station Sourbrodt, Commune de Waimès, Parc Naturel Haute Fagne-Eifel, B-Wallonia*
- *Lysmolen, Gemeente Bocholt, Grenspark Kempen-Broek, B-Flanders*
- *Vennbahn at Walheim, Stadt Aachen, D*

These site specific experiments can be considered as ‘samples’ of landscape perception, just as soil scientists take soil samples at certain spots to gain insight into soil type and texture. Therefore soil samples (cores) serve here as a metaphoric image for the site specific landscape experience. Soil cores usually reveal the layered structure of a soil profile to a certain depths. Also in “Dear Landscape” the ‘soil samples’ are layered, however not revealing physical structures of the landscape, but thematic aspects of perception of and behavior in the landscape. Starting from the stories and perceptions gathered on site, we clustered different aspects into thematic narratives, which are appearing to be relevant across the borders and connect the sites on a euregional level.

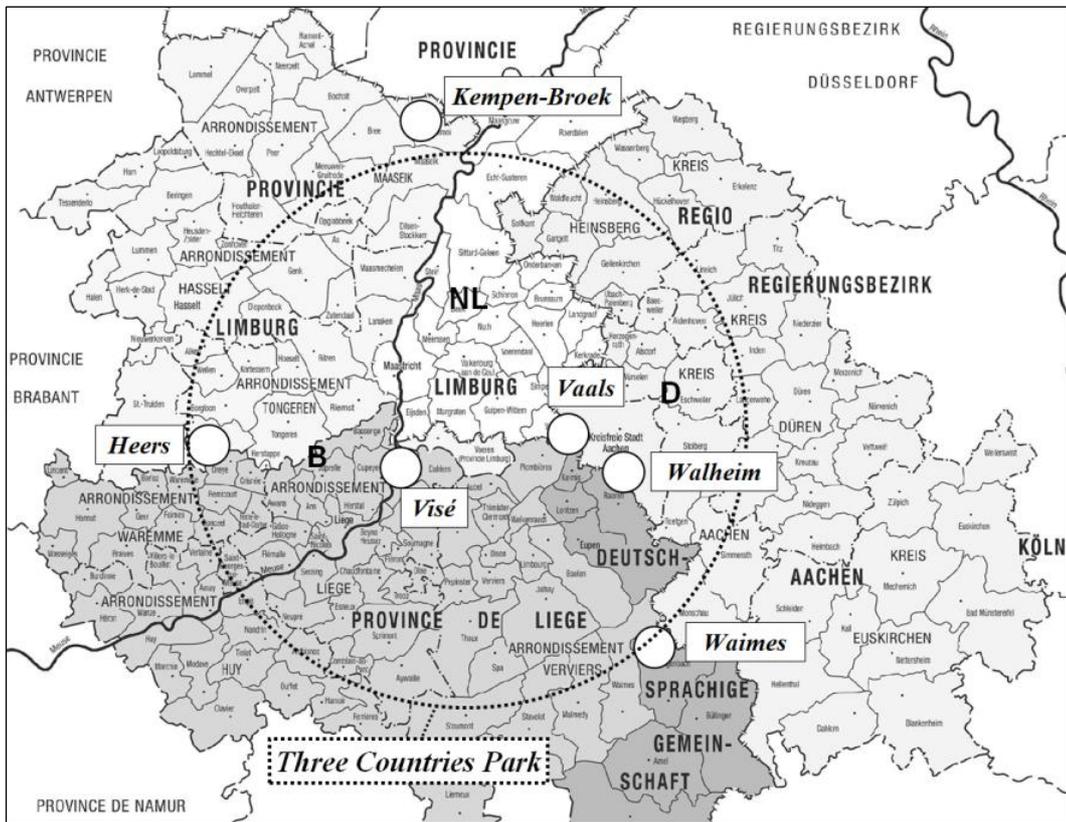


Figure 1: Dear landscape locations within the Euregio Meuse-Rhein

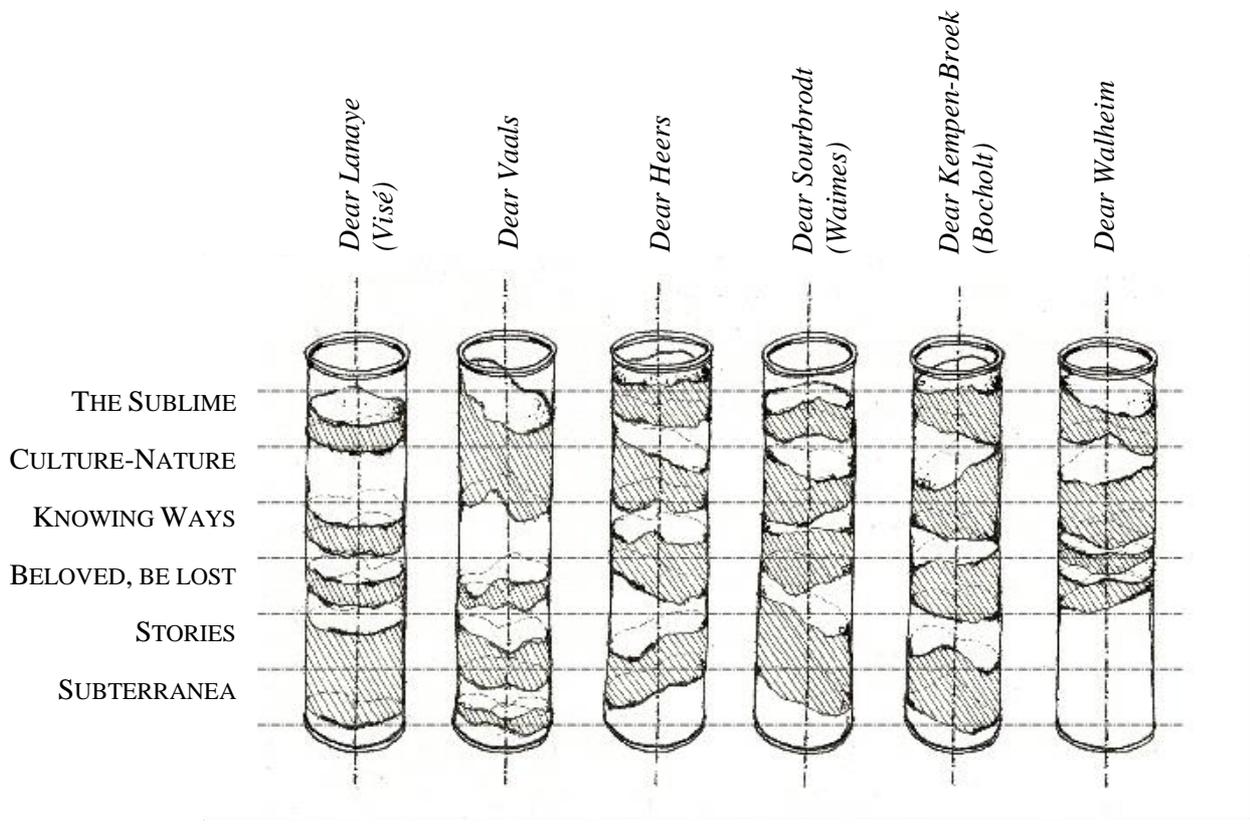


Figure 2: Soil sample layers

Intangible landscape layers

In governmental landscape and spatial planning or project development mostly physical landscape elements, like water, green infrastructure, certain species, agricultural or urbanized areas etc. or landscape aesthetics as an array/pattern of elements (as mostly defined by experts) are dealt with. Furthermore, from an ecological or geographic point of view the landscape is usually considered a layered system composed of the relief with its bedrock and soil layers, the (climate &) water system, the vegetation regime with its fauna, and the structures cultivated or built by humans.

The first insight the Dear Landscape project gave, is that – while landscape perception is of course based on these physical landscape elements and patterns – the more intangible landscape characteristics are of utmost importance to people, e.g. such features like the property regime, the accessibility of the landscape, special places, views and atmosphere, the degree of cultivation and management or ‘wilderness’ and ‘emptiness’ as well as histories and personal meaning attached to landscape places and elements, etc. From the perceptions, observations and stories gathered on site we derived six thematic clusters/ layers representing some of these intangible aspects:

..... THE SUBLIME, THE PICTURESQUE
..... THE CULTURAL, THE NATURAL
..... KNOWING WAYS, WAYS OF KNOWING
..... BELOVED, BE LOST
..... STORIES TO BE TOLD, SECRETS TO BE KEPT
..... SUBTERRANEA (AS BELOW SO ABOVE)

As the perception and management of the aspects can vary greatly on one site or throughout the Euregio we constructed the thematic layers as ‘polarities’ giving a range of different ways of seeing things and dealing with them. Furthermore, the layers form storylines which connect the sites within the Euregio and tell about its territory as a common ground, as a landscape shared and coproduced by people and industries, plants and animals, and the very interaction of their past and present activities.

Reflections on landscape quality objectives

As the concept of landscape quality (LQ) and landscape quality objectives (LQO) is not self-evident and requires a lot of explanation when talking to citizen, we did not ask people directly about LQOs they wish to see accomplished. Instead, we asked for people’s favorite spots, why they come here, what they think this area has to offer, etc. and merged that with our own observations and impressions. Therefore, the derivation of LQOs from the thematic ‘site sample layers’ is to be seen as an interpretation and as theses, which can serve as a basis for further discussion in the Three Countries Park, the partner regions and the sites concerned.

1. THE SUBLIME, THE PICTURESQUE

BEAUTY & ATMOSPHERE. LARGE-SCALE//SMALL-SCALE. GREATNESS//HOMELINESS

Stories of... Kempen Broek: “Look around, isn’t it paradise on earth?” / “In-between our tasks at the farm, we sometimes go for a ride with our bikes, just to enjoy the beautiful surroundings.” / “I cannot mention a single favorite spot. Seeing a dragonfly on a leaf, what else would I need?” ... Walheim: “From my wheelchair, I look left and right at the flowers and plants in the berm and I blissfully think: all this beauty, created by God.” ... Vaals: Locals with some knowledge of the area know their favorite spots very well. One inhabitant described it like this: “the area between boundary stones one, two, and three, because of the splendid view on the surroundings. One can even see the city of Heerlen from there.” / The owner of an Inn mentioned a specific pasture as the most beautiful part of the region, simply because of the view you have from here. ... Waimes: “It’s a good thing if you are able to visit solitude, it isn’t when solitude decides to visit you.” ... Heers: A recent architectural folly in the neighboring town Borgloon called ‘See-through-church’ opened a lot of eyes. It attracts visitors and passers-by and emphasizes the beauty of its surroundings. A church without being a church, but with almost religious and certainly spiritual effects on its visitors. ... Visé: The CBR-quarry is still in use, but the lake within it is certainly one of the most beautiful spots in this area.

The landscape of the Euregio is highly diverse and stunningly beautiful. Beauty of course lies in the eye of the beholder. People see beauty in many different things: The wide views from the old country roads in the *Pays de Herve* or the long views along the river *Meuse*, be it industrialized (between Liège and Maastricht) or renaturalized (north of Maastricht), the half-timbered houses embedded in the green hills of the *Heuvelland*, the windings of the *Iterbach* in the *Münsterländchen*, the famous sea of blossoms of narcissuses in the *Hohnbachtal* and the *Eifel* or more hidden patches of orchids at *Montagne St Pierre*. Why is it so important to consider these different aspects of experiencing landscape beauty in territorial development? Because if one perceives something as beautiful or fascinating, this evokes joy and other positive feelings. Beautiful landscape experiences can generate contentment, calm, confidence, and gratefulness etc. up to spiritual experiences of solitude, connectedness and wholeness. These experiences are not restricted to ‘natural areas’. On the contrary, sometimes large-scale industrial interventions evoke the same, like the remnants from mining activities or the big sluice and cut-through of the *Albert-Canal* in the Meuse valley. Also an agreeable soundscape and pleasant smell contributes to emotional landscape experiences or a contrast of brightness and darkness (e.g. *Stiltegebiede* in *Zuid Limburg* and *Voeren, Sternepark* of the *Nationalpark Eifel*)

LQ: The close *vicinity of sublime and picturesque beauty*

A special quality of the Euregio Meuse-Rhine is that the sublime and picturesque experiences of landscape lie very close to each other. While ‘the sublime’ seems to tend more towards triggering feelings of freedom and greatness, ‘the picturesque’ more tends to elicit comfort and homeliness. The whole range of this polarity is essential to people’s wellbeing. These ‘true’ joyful experiences may become increasingly important as a counterbalance to societal trends towards digitalized workplaces and social media dependent living, but need to be actively encouraged for a better physical and mental health.

LQO: *To maintain or even strengthen the individual landscape character and the contrast of the sublime and the picturesque landscape experience* (without creating a landscape museum). *To maintain or even stage views*, by keeping views open from building or creating new scenic places, (not necessarily by watchtowers, but e.g. simply by widening paths, placing rocks or trunks at beautiful points inviting people to rest and have a look).

2. THE CULTURAL, THE NATURAL

(MAN-MADE//NATURAL. CULTIVATED//WILD. USED//ABANDONED)

Stories of ... Visé: It is said that the industrial excavations, together with the characteristics of the soil, created a microclimate that houses typical sorts of flora and fauna. Butterflies, orchids and spiders are the main examples of this, and are highly cherished by the islanders. / Close to Chateau Neercanne is a forest with very old and thick trees. They have been secured by about 4000 people that all donated some money. ... Waimes: There’s not much places where the peat is still untouched. In the area north of Sourbrodt you’ll find one of the few exceptions. ... Kempen Broek: “The toxic emissions of the zinc industry always kept this area from development, so the fact that there still is lots of open space is because of this factory” / People are afraid of these wild cows called ‘Tauros’ once a bull visited a scouts camp. / “Once I saw a rabbit and I saved it from getting stuck into my machine, soon afterwards it was killed by a bird of prey.” ... Walheim: The former limekilns and quarries are fascinating places but seem forgotten or neglected. People even throw their waste into them. The volunteer fire department cleaned the lime kilns from its litter, but after only two years it’s a mess again. ... Heers: A barn owl used to visit the castle regularly. Someone stood suddenly face to face with it. It flew away completely noiseless. That must have been a thrilling experience.

What is regarded as (purely) natural is often heavily man-made, a result of industry. ‘Untouched’ nature is hard to find in the EMR as it is highly cultivated and lies in the midst of one of the most densely populated areas of Europe. However, what has been once industrially exploited now happens to be protected and appreciated as nature reserve, e.g. the zinc and lead mining heaps/sites in *Stolberg, Kelmis* and *Plombières*. People tend to perceive such areas as ‘pure’ nature. Also administrations often talk of ‘nature’ (as opposed to humans) versus other land uses. But is there pristine nature anywhere on this planet anymore and can it be separated from human activity? With regard to climate change or nano-particles in the most remote places, we may have to recognize that there is only hybridized culture-nature left, a systemic co-product of human interventions with natural processes.

This may change the perspective of management: partnering with industry for example to consciously co-produce “natura naturata” in a way that it can act as sustainable “natura naturans” as the natural productivity that can still keep up the desirable living conditions for humans and a wide diversity of other species. Nice examples in the Three Countries Park are the *Grenzmaas* project/ *Rivierpark Maasvalley* or the *Grensschap Albertkanal*.

LQ: The intertwined culture-nature, industrial nature, second wilderness

Many areas of (former) industrial sites and of ‘industrial nature’ in the EMR are regarded as valuable heritage, very special landscapes, and attractive places. They offer unique views (e.g. *ENCI groeve*) or rare biodiversity (e.g. *Galmei-Veilchen*) for example. But this is the case, because they have been abandoned or exempt from use. Even though culture and nature are closely intertwined, there is still a difference of ‘the cultivated/ used’ and ‘the wild/ unexploited’ areas left to its natural dynamics. Those ‘second wilderness’ areas are certainly fascinating to and appropriated by people. This is visible for example in the self-made trails or ‘wild’ campfire sites at *Montagne St Pierre*. Sometimes, ‘forgotten spaces’ like the *Berwinne* estuary in between an area full of infrastructure are the loveliest places. Unfortunately, also a lot of garbage can be found in these areas.

A certain degree of ‘wilderness’ can evoke feelings of release, freedom and adventure due to being unobserved and away from societal control and expectations. This obviously seems to be an important need. However, the absence of control and maintenance may also go along with people leaving their garbage behind, because nobody cares. For some people it is unacceptable not to ‘use’ areas or animals. While some love ‘the wild’, others just fear it (see for example the ‘*Taurus*’ in *Kempen-Broek*).

LQO: To enhance landscape diversity and create a good co-existence of the cultivated/used and the wild/unused (culture-)nature. Both, the cultivated/ used and the wild/unused, however, should have a right to exist. Especially in the densely populated, highly cultivated landscape of the Three Countries Park, it seems a valid quality objective to maintain or bring back a certain degree of ‘wilderness’. This could include for example the non-use and low-maintenance of abandoned (industrial) spaces taken over by natural processes and people, the protection and reintroduction of wild living species into the cultural landscape, creating space for rivers to form meanders, or buiding agreements to enable a certain percentage of trees to grow old in managed forests. For good acceptance all this should go along with an extended citizen dialogue.

3. KNOWING WAYS, WAYS OF KNOWING

(VISITOR//RESIDENT. ACCESS//INACCESSIBILITY. FORMAL//INFORMAL)

Stories of...Vaals: Turnstiles of steel, small gates used to give way to people but prevent cattle from leaving the meadow, used to be called ‘Pruisenfalle (trap for Prussians). / It’s a constantly recurring story: locals telling us they love their natural surroundings and regularly take a walk in it, but are annoyed more and more because of the litter that tourists are said to leave behind. ...**Walheim:** There is so many turnstiles in the field, sometimes completely free-standing without any barbed wire near. / Inhabitants don’t mind to crawl over barbed wire to reach the fields that are nice for a walk. ...**Waimes:** The former rail yard is a long strip that seems to be impenetrable crossways, but upon a closer look you’ll see that the neighbors created small informal paths as shortcuts to their homes, only by traversing along the same route again and again. ...**Visé:** “Between the barrage of Visé and the marina of Maastricht you find only one - more or less official - spot on each side of the Meuse, where you can put your canoe in the water.” ...**Kempen Broek:** “For about 9km, there is not a single opportunity to cross the canal.”

Landscape perception and behavior certainly varies with different ‘user groups’, especially between visitors and residents, partly conflicting with each other. Sometimes this is solved by ‘time shifts’. It can happen that residents access the landscape just after the tourists have left, as e.g. observed on the *Vaalseberg/ Drielandenpunt*, an important touristic attraction especially for the Dutch (highest point in the Netherlands). Also spatial conflicts arise, for example between those seeking recreation and producers or property owners: fenced-off property and production areas, inaccessible for other residents and visitors on the one hand and disrespectful behavior (litter, dog shit, trampling etc.) of visitors on private land on the other hand (see point 4).

LQ: The *permeability* of the landscape

There are well established hiking and bicycling networks in the EMR, growing more and more together across the borders. In some areas like parts of the *Heuvelland* and *Pays de Herve* or *Münsterländchen* (Walheim), the tradition of ‘turnstiles’ is still actively used giving people the possibility to walk across private land. Nevertheless, in many especially rural and suburban areas, it seems that ‘ways of moving relatively freely’ through the landscape on an everyday basis is underdeveloped compared to touristic routes. Such ways don’t need to be paved pathways. Often small trails are sufficient for children to visit their friends a few farms away without having their parents to drive them there, or for people to have a nice sunset walk in the evening after a long day of work. Furthermore, such simple trails support curiosity and spirit of discovery of children and adults, can evoke feelings of freedom (of choice), adventure, and self-confidence, and enable people to follow (their inner) tracks and to find (their own) ways.

LQO: *To enhance landscape permeability for short and long walking distances* (not necessarily the tourist path networks), however not too formalized, and also not access everywhere. Trails could go along field edges, between lines of fences and hedges, along creeks and buffer strips, along contours at forest-field edges, and include ascents/descents from valley floors to ridges in regular intervals. Such trails accompanied by tree groups, hedges and flowering field edges may also enhance the habitat quality and permeability of the landscape for various species (e.g. bees and butterflies, or the wild cat), which in turn could be observed by people once in a while.

4. BELOVED, BE LOST

OWNERSHIP PUBLIC//PRIVATE. APPROPRIATED//DISRESPECTED. EXCLUSION//INCLUSION

Stories of ... Heers: Private terrain exists all over the Euregio, but in Heers, the emphasis on them being private seems bigger than anywhere else. Fences and ‘no-admittance’ notices are an as integral part of the cultural landscape as fruit trees are. ... Visé: One thing that unites them: the Montagne Saint-Pierre. Most of the inhabitants speak of ‘their’ Montagne, they deeply relate to it and take care of it very well. It belongs to their definition of home / When the concrete was removed from the quay alongside the Meuse, people grabbed the opportunity to plant wildflowers instead / There is an inhabitant from Lanaye who takes a walk on the Montagne every day, cleaning up rubbish. Sometimes he spears cans on fences to put the attention to the rubbish that’s all over the place. ... Kempen-Broek: The accessibility of this area is so good: you can easily find and enjoy forest, shifting sands, fields, marches, all this can be found. It looks like farmers and land owners believe that this accessibility contributes to their welfare, too. / “This little bridge is one of my favorite spots in Kempen-Broek.” / “It’s hard to imagine, but it was possible to fish in various places in Kempen-Broek. The fish was traded on markets as far as Maastricht.” ... Waimes: The unused rail yard actually isn’t unused. Now and then some children use its platforms and its green to play a kind of alternative football, which they seem to enjoy very much. ... Walheim: “I visit my mother in the elderly home every week. I try to take her out for a walk on the Vennbahn every time I’m there”.

The landscape is a common good. In our culture, however, private property has a high status. On the one hand this means security and that the land is taken care of. On the other hand this means that people are mostly excluded from this private land. (The same can also happen on public land, e.g. in very strict nature reserves). This often results in a lack of accessibility/permeability as described above. So what is owned and cherished by the one is lost for the other. But it depends very much on the distribution (spatial pattern) and the management of the public and private land (e.g. rights of way). Furthermore, the private use of sites can create both, rich cultural landscapes (e.g. *Pays de Herve* or *Heuvelland*) as a common good on the upside as well as external effects (e.g. through wastewater/water run-off) on other sites, where common goods are lost (e.g. loss of high water quality and loss of the former abundance of fish species almost everywhere in the Three Countries Park) on the downside.

In the Euregio different ways of ‘ownership’ can be found: fenced-off houses with private gardens and fenced-in production fields, but also farmland, where access is granted (see turnstiles above), shared property (e.g. communal gardens), public land, which is appropriated by people (e.g. kids building wooden sheds in the forest at the *Vaalsberg*) or partly public partly private nature reserves, where people feel very attached to and responsible for (e.g. *Montagne St Pierre*). However, many areas also show signs of disrespect as visible in the omnipresent litter.

LQ: **Public spaces nearby**, which people can appropriate themselves. **Common goods**, such as high water quality, biodiversity, typical landscape character, which are beneficial to and can be shared by many people.

LQO: **To develop an inclusive landscape with a sufficient share and favorable pattern of public property within larger areas of private land**, especially for non-property owners, for less mobile social groups like elderly or disabled people as well as for families with small children. Such areas should accept a certain dynamic of citizen usage, e.g. self-made trails, people placing a fallen trunk over a creek, kids building huts of dead branches etc. **To support a feeling of ,ownership‘, pride and responsibility** of local people (as well as visitors) for landscapes and places. **To develop a new culture of commons** (‘Allmende’) e.g. by establishing a higher cultural status and a culture of respect for the common goods. Vice versa this may include communication campaigns between visitors and property owners with regard to accessing and respecting private land.

5. STORIES TO BE TOLD, SECRETS TO BE KEPT

LOCATIONS LOADED WITH HISTORICAL, SYMBOLIC AND PERSONAL MEANING

Stories of ... Visé: *The Bonhomme de Lanaye was a famous natural ‘statue’ of stone, resembling a male figure, looking out in the canal and the village. It has been demolished some time ago because of the construction of the canal, probably accidentally. Its three stone pieces can still be found on the hillside. / Grate cu, a kind of gin distilled from locally found wild berries is only produced in Lanaye [for own use]. ... Kempen Broek:* *“The fields over here used to be wetlands. Children from a farm next to it took a boat to school, the oak to which the boat was tied up is still over there.” / The ‘dodenraad’ used to run exactly here. There’s a story of a guy called ‘Bolle Jan’ who smuggled more than 300 sheep through. After the war, this has been concealed for a long time by the municipality in order to maintain the good relations with their neighbours. ... Vaals:* *Near to the 3-countries point you can see an old burial mound, and pieces of stone that actually look like being melted together, which happened because of geological processes called ‘Sterrenstenen’, as if they were shooting stars and landed over here a long time ago. / Along a path from Epenerberbaan to Holstert, one can spot a whole family of dwarfs. Even Snowwhite is present, emphasizing the fairy-tale qualities of the region. ... Walheim:* *It is said that the Eagle Owl lives within one of the former quarries, which makes it an area of importance! ... Waimes:* *Amidst nature you can find a twisted airscrew from world war II, as a memorial for the pilots who crashed over here. ... Heers:* *Not only the large amount of loopholes within the walls of the castle and farm indicate there have been many battles around it. It is said that when people started to plant trees in the surroundings, they came across skeletons.*

Many stories can be told about the euregional landscape and certain places and elements of it. Through these histories and stories the landscape and specific locations gain an extra layer of meaning. This meaning can be highly symbolic like the highest point of the Netherlands or the 3-Countries Point (which for a certain period of time actually was a 4-countries point due to the history of *Neutral Moresnet*), or iconic like the cut-through of the *Albert-Canaal*, or culturally-historically significant like the *American cemeteries* (remembrance culture). The symbolic, iconic or historical meaning attracts a lot of visitors. On the other hand the meaning of certain places, sometimes hidden places – can be very personal. People used to play here as a kid, walk their dog there every day or just love a place, because it’s quiet and has a nice view. Some people are happy to share these places; others rather want to keep them secret and calm. However, not only happy memories are connected to places, but also mysterious smuggler stories and sorrowful war stories, still influencing cross-border life today.

LQ: **Unique symbolic places** with highly formal meaning, **special and partly ‘secret’ places** with very personal meaning, both with happy experiences and sorrowful memories (see also point 6)

LQO: **To keep a balance of both symbolic and secret, when developing places** (e.g. like the *Drielandenpunt* or the marl groves in *Lanaye* or the area around *Moelingen*). Not all stories need to be displayed, not all places to be equipped with explanatory signboards. However, enable stories to be told by locals and to be discovered by visitors, e.g. through communication technologies.

6. SUBTERRANEA (AS BELOW SO ABOVE)

BELOWGROUND//ABOVEGROUND. EXPLOITATION//FASCINATION. PAST// PRESENT

Stories of ... Visé: A straight tunnel of almost 2 kilometers connects both sides of the mountain. It is still accessible and was dug before World War II; "Did you know this area used to be sea a long time ago? In the ceiling of one of the marl quarry caves in the montagne St Pierre, the fossil of a turtle has been found". There is a quarry cave called 'Grotte de l'Eglise' it reminds of a gothic church. ... **Vaals:** Just before the Vaalserberg, seemingly in the middle of a nature reserve, freight trains speed their way into the mountain in order to reach Germany, only a couple of meters underneath the 3-countries point. ... **Heers:** The reason for the large amount of castles in the Haspengouw can literally be found in the ground, that is to say, the reason is the ground itself. Extremely fertile, making it the object of conflicts already for ages. ... **Walheim:** The former lime kilns and quarries are fascinating places, but seem forgotten or neglected. ... **Kempen-Broek:** Generations of ancestors cultivated the badlands and raised the ground level of this area, now all efforts are being undone in just a couple of years.

The EMR is literally undermined due to (coal, zinc, lead...) mining, transportation (railway tunnels) and excavation of (building) material (e.g limestone) as well as activities connected to war. Although not always tangible, this heavily influences life 'on top of it'. The fertile Loess soils and the mineral subsoil assets shaped the political and economic development of the border region, as well as its architecture and landscape. This meant an economic upswing on the one hand, but also difficult structural changes, toxic deposits and water pollution on the other. Also war activities left numerous cavities in the underground, like forts, bunkers, tunnels, etc. Some of these places are developed as touristic attractions (e.g. *Mergelrijk Valkenburg*), recreational areas (*Terrils*), nature reserves (e.g. for rare bat species) and places of remembrance culture (e.g. *Fort Battice*, *Fort Eben-Emael*). Others seem to be abandoned and forgotten and only rise up from the "unconscious to the conscious mind" when occasionally passing by its traces in the landscape (e.g. entrances of caves, tunnels, bunkers). In the perception of the people these places are partly connected with fascination and adventure, partly with personal stories and sorrowful experiences. [However, the underground landscape is by no means just a topic steeped in history. There is a great deal of controversy over whether to restart mining to exploit the rare earth deposits in *Kelmis* and *Plombières*, holding valuable resources to producing mobile phones or batteries for electric cars. This raises great hopes for economic development, but also great fears of renewed toxic and infrastructural environmental pollution as well as resistance across the borders.]

LQ: The *Underground landscape in itself*

LQO: *Unclear. How to deal with the underground landscape? It is an ambivalent matter.* Should it be further developed for heritage, tourism and remembrance culture, made largely accessible and brought to people's attention? Or should places and stories rather be kept secret (see point 5) with possibilities for occasional discovery? This probably depends very much on the site concerned and the history and stories connected to it. However, it seems important and interesting to further investigate this topic in a euregional project.

Landscape governance and project options

In terms of realizing some of these landscape quality objectives it seems that conventional spatial and landscape planning/ master planning are important, but limited in their possibilities to reach out to citizen. They should be complemented by citizen dialogue, creative communication campaigns, and 'outdoor (inter)actions'. Some ideas and examples:

An atmospheric landscape: Let people describe their landscape experiences and feelings, e.g. by landscape painting, photography and poetry competitions. Project to manufacture 'land art like' benches together with citizen and artists and have them installed, where people think they should be placed. Connect health care programs with landscape experiences (at schools, work places, in hospitals etc.). Celebrate landscape beauty by landscape festivals.

Co-existence of the Cultivated and the Wild in the landscape: Recognize and communicate the today's inseparability of culture-nature, and the right of existence and beauty of both the cultivated and the wild places and life forms. Campaigning that 'unused spaces' can still be useful and productive (ecosystem services).

A ‘litterless’ landscape: Stronger design, control and maintenance of a site may reduce litter in the landscape. But then, the quality of a certain degree of ‘wilderness’ could get lost. Organize participatory outdoor campaigns, like river clean ups and such, to support responsibility for and ownership of the landscape. Let artists create ‘litter creepers’ from the garbage found on site together with local people and e.g. school children, which will be exposed in the landscapes concerned, accompanied by fun communication campaigns.

A permeable landscape: Let people draw the missing trails and connections on a map. Develop public trails and routes for residents and nearby visitors (not necessarily for tourists) permeating the privately owned land, e.g. with small trails/ pathways along field edges, between fences. Adopt-your-trail programs for maintenance. Enhance communication between land owners/ managers and visitors, so that the private land is respected.

An inclusive landscape: Conduct co-production workshops inviting citizen to co-design their surroundings together with landscape architects and urban planners. Creative communication campaigns for “The Commons”.

The underground landscape: Euregional project, mapping and investigating relevant sites, enable discussion on how to deal with them, including people’s perception, usage and stories.

Conclusions

Landscape perceptions and experiences are as different as people are. Thus, it might actually be difficult for the competent authorities to formulate coherent landscape quality objectives for a certain landscape area, which consider the different perceptions and needs of people. But the Dear Landscape project also shows that new valuable knowledge with sometimes unexpected insights can be generated, when entering into dialogue with citizen about the environment in which they live.

It seems that landscape experiences touch upon fundamental emotions and questions, which are highly relevant for people’s identity and well-being. Uncomplicated and trustful way of talking to people in their daily environment, should become a standard component of territorial development projects, be it urbanizing land use changes or nature developments, as both are changing the common ‘living room’ of people. However, beyond stakeholder consultation of interest groups and publication of plans, the authorities often lack the resources, capacity and experience to conduct dialog processes, communication campaigns or co-creative workshops.

Furthermore, the authorities responsible for landscape policy are confronted with a multitude of sectoral political objectives that each claims their place in the physical landscape: for example constructing affordable housing, providing site for economic activities and infrastructure, providing considerable amounts of biomass for the bioeconomy, or creating water retention areas for climate adaptation. In order to integrate these different requirements with each other and with people’s landscape aspirations, investment priorities on the European to regional level should support area-based teams and tools for cross-sectoral and citizen dialog, co-production and transition management. This could include creative campaigns and interactive outdoor actions meeting people in the landscape and taking people out into the landscape.

A return of investment could be “a Europe closer to citizen” which is one of the new policy objectives of the European Union and a goal of the People to People programme.

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