

**DOCTORAL SCHOOL IN ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING**

**Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering**

**University of Trento – Italy**

**XXI cycle**

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**A kaleidoscope on ordinary landscapes.  
The perception of the landscape between complexity of  
meaning and operating reduction**

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**Abstract**

This research has started from some issues affecting the debate in progress on policies for landscape and confronts itself with the actuality of a review of some paradigms of interpretation that could substantiate the practice of landscape transformation.

The main questions that will be addressed is what the ordinary contemporary landscape is, experimenting the perception as a tool at first of interpretation, therefore potentially operating, from the demands of the European Landscape Convention, according to which "Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors". Assuming the landscape perception as a means of expression of the relationship between society and territory, this study develops and tests a methodology for its comprehension, through kaleidoscopic visions which interpret the variety of the situated looks.

By means of the methodology we aim to explore how a variety of people experience landscapes and – as a consequence - how they perceive them. The proposed approach refers to the landscape perception as a complex system in its multiple dimensions (physical/natural, symbolic/cultural, personal/ collective) that becomes significant as expression of a contemporary condition of living places. It begets a thinking material to understand values and themes, on which could be possible basing actions and policies for landscape.

The Kaleidoscope, which is here proposed as device to represent perceived landscapes, derives from the sense of this research. Actually, the explicit reference to ordinary landscapes implies the awareness that the contemporary landscape can not be understood through a tale made of synthetic and mimetic/typological representations, but is expressed predominantly in ordinary contexts, whose not consolidated images neither shared attributions of meanings exist.

The Kaleidoscope has set as a composition of diagrams and narratives, which are translated in looks type and themes for action, contributing to reify the problems the landscape poses as challenges to planning and the perception is offering to return.

The research is substantiated by a long experimental stage, when - through an experience of understanding the perceived landscape in a valley place in Trentino - the themes tackled in the theoretical-critical part pit themselves strength the realm of a contemporary landscapes and the specificity of the ordinary ones, which more than others claim the experimentation of interpretative and operational tools.

The experience has been set up as a cognitive practice, able to be consolidated and repeatable in the ordinary planning processes. It can therefore be understood as a paradigmatic experience of approach to contemporary landscape.