Bordering the Alps: drawing a “new space of action” inside the Alpine Convention’s limits

DEL BIAGGIO, Cristina

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Bordering the Alps

Drawing a “new space of action” inside the Alpine Convention’s limits

Cristina Del Biaggio
Department of geography, University of Geneva &
Department of Regional Studies, University of Tampere (Finland)
1. Presentation of the pan-Alpine actors acting inside the Alpine Convention’s framework
2. Pan-Alpine identity: objectivation and identification
3. Conclusive remarks
Presentation’s plan

Presentation of the pan-Alpine actors acting inside the Alpine Convention’s framework
Alpine states & European Union

- Key role of national states → signature of the Alpine Convention (1991)
- Alpine Space programme & European Territorial Cooperation projects (former Interreg)
Networks of local actors: scaling down initiatives
A central actor: CIPRA

Pan-alpine networks

Alpine Convention

Alpine Space (Interreg)
Vertical & horizontal reorganization of territorial levels (Väyrynen, 2003)

Result: new form of governance at the mountain range scale

→ Creation of new borders for the Alps

Aim: build a area of collective action committed to sustainable development (v. Journal of Alpine Research, n°97-2, 2009)
How to grasp the “identity catchword” (Häkli, 2001)?

- **Objectivation**: identification of an object by a subject to understand the world (Debarbieux & Rudaz, 2010)

- **Identification**: recognition of the capacity of individuals and groups to feel part of a collectivity → affirmation of a **chosen and shared collective identity** (Debarbieux, 2006)
Presentation’s plan

Objectivation
Objectivation of the Alps: some elements

- **Borders** of the Alpine region: contested geographical borders, uncontested socio-cultural background
“The definition of the territory of the Alpine Convention in Slovenia is stupid, because it is restricted to a certain geographical middle area of the Alps. The definition leaves out large areas and practically the majority of Slovenia. In Italy, the whole karst is inside the Alpine Convention, until Trieste, but in Slovenia the karst is not inside” (Dragan, CIPRA)
Objectivation of the Alps: some elements

Exactly the roots, coming from the way of living with a similar landscape make us analogous. The farming work for example, which knows similar problems, similar challenges, it is the same if you are in South-Tyrol, or in Switzerland, or in our place. And from there on, the same mentality is built, which is similar, it is the same where I look at. And this is fascinating. And I think, this cannot be fixed along national borders. (Hans, Mayor)
Objectivation of the Alps: some elements

- **Borders** of the Alpine region: contested geographical borders, uncontested socio-cultural background

- **Diversity** as fundament of the Alpine **unity**, root metaphor
Borders of the Alpine region: contested geographical borders, uncontested socio-cultural background

Diversity as fundament of the Alpine unity → root metaphor

Nostalgic image of the Alps (one of the “five recurrent images of the Alps” → Petite, 2009)
Objectivation of the Alps: some elements

3rd Report on the state of the Alps (c) CIPRA international
Presentation’s plan

Identification to the Alps
Identification to the Alps: two examples

Tells from two municipalities situated in the pre-Alps, but the most active in the network...

© Bundesministerium für Umwelt (Österreich), Jungend und Familie, 1996
Mäder (Austria)

“What happens up there, in the upstanding mountains, has important implications here” (Mayor of Mäder)

- Suffering from the consequences of the upstanding Alps
- Identification to sustainable development more than to the Alps
Budoia (Italy):

I am as well [as a lot of other persons in this town] son of emigrants, who went to Switzerland. I feel the attraction towards the mountain. When I have spoken to the people about that, I felt that they understood. CIPRA and Alliance in the Alps gave me the possibility to promote and wake up feelings that the population, anyway, was "brewing inside". (Antonio) (Mayor of Budoia)
Identification to the Alps (cont.)

- **Budoia (Italy):**
  - Transform a personal identity in collective identity
  - Possibility to get funds via the network

→ Both *strategic identities*:
  - For Budoia: *affective*
  - For Mäder: *functional and pragmatic*
Even for the most active and committed persons, identification to the Alps is more a matter of opportunity than of belonging.

No need of a strong identification to the Alps to support successful pan-Alpine projects, which contribute to give another image of the Alps (objectivation) i.e. the Alps as a transboundary area not divided by national states.