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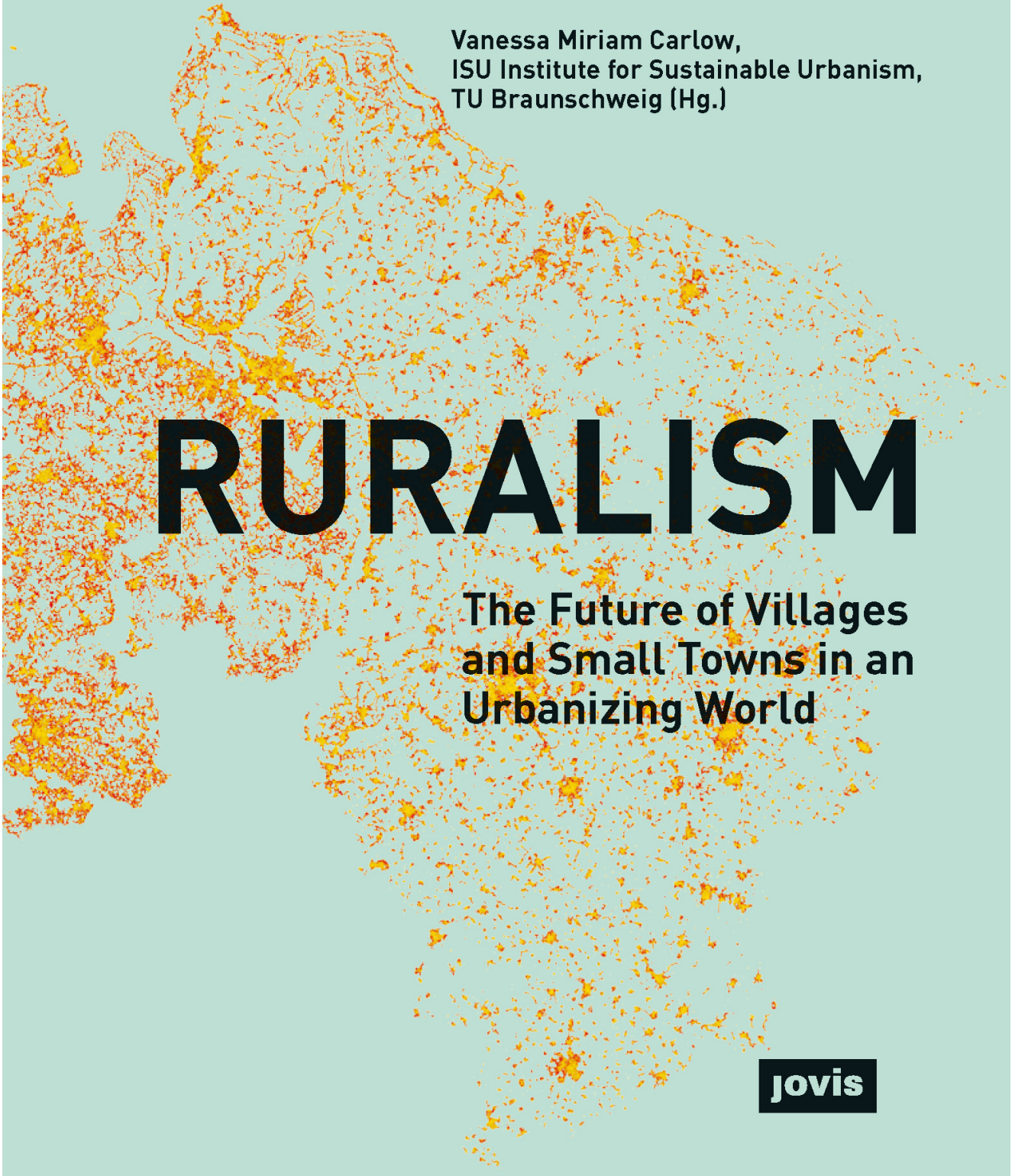

RURALISM

The Future of Villages and Small Towns in an Urbanizing World

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The Relevance of Thinking Rural!

Vanessa Miriam Carlow

According to the United Nations, two-thirds of the world population will live in urban areas in the near future—that is in cities and urban regions.[1] How will the other third live? This question alone suggests a simplistic dichotomy between urban and rural spaces that no longer exists. Alongside—not opposite—the transformation and drastic expansion of urban regions worldwide, rural space, too, has changed dramatically: after mechanization and industrialization, rural space has experienced mass out-migration of people. On the other hand, being a recreational landscape it temporarily receives a mass immigration of guests. Rural space has received waste and unwanted or outdated infrastructures from cities. It has served as extraction site for natural resources, creating manmade landscapes of an unseen scale. Rural space has seen a revolution in farming and the genetic modification of plants and animals to feed the world's population. Its water dams, wind farms, cornfields, and solar parks are producing energy at an unprecedented scale. In light of this recent massive change, why are rural spaces often dismissed as declining or stagnating?

Throughout the last decades, the attention of architecture and planning has shifted to be more or less exclusively concerned with the city. Where villages and small towns have not been on the agenda, the city-centered discourse becomes almost a self-fulfilling prophecy with cities becoming larger and better, more interesting and beautiful, whereas villages and small towns are more or less left to their own devices. Few forward-looking strategies for developing villages and small towns exist—even though there are ample methods for how to manage their shrinkage. In contrast with shrinkage, there are

many rural regions, villages, and small towns, which can prosper from establishing a good working economy in a rural network.

And alongside the cities, the grand societal challenges also leave their footprint in rural areas: climate change, resource shortage, the diversification of the population, the need to be more resilient, or the question of how to organize sustainable mobility and civic participation—not least of which is the question of identity. Rural areas and their landscapes oftentimes serve as a medium of collective identity and culture for entire regions—representing an image of *Heimat* and the longing for a wholesome world. Which strategies fit the needs of villages and small towns?

The #3 ISU Talks, held in November 2015 at TU Braunschweig, aimed at a discussion of the "Future of Villages and Small Towns in an Urbanizing World." Along with the following questions, researchers from different fields including urban and landscape planning, architecture, geography, and social and cultural sciences discussed the future of rural spaces: How and with what human consequences are rural spaces being urbanized today? What are the existing and potential connections between urban and rural spaces? What new concepts for rural living are there? Do we need to formulate a (new) vision for 'ruralism'? And what role can 'urban design,' architecture, and planning play in preparing rural life and space for the future? Which vocabulary do architects and planners, anthropologists, and natural scientists have to describe that massive change? Which strategies are employed to guide the development in space described as rural?

This book combines different disciplinary perspectives on the rural realm.

The articles are centered around three core themes.

The first chapter looks at landscape as a defining element and physical representation of the rural. Some authors argue that the rural is in fact not disappearing, but rather being absorbed to the city to form strongholds there in terms of landscape and also cultural practices related to landscapes, like urban gardening.

The second chapter discusses ruralism and concepts for rural areas in European countries and regions from Austria, Sweden, Bavaria, Lower Saxony, and the North of Germany.

The third chapter looks at urbanization processes in fast-growing countries of the Middle East and Global South, as well as China, where the rural is under heavy pressure to disappear in favor of suburban, low-density development.

Interviews round off each chapter.

A photo essay by The Pk. Odessa Co of Lower Saxony taken in five of ISU's partner municipalities provides a great introduction to this book.

A Rural State of Emergency

The urgency with which villages and small towns are searching for a liveable future in an urbanizing world was revealed during the "Academy of Future Rural Spaces" that the Institute for Sustainable Urbanism (ISU) launched in 2015 following an open call by our institute. With "Have Space. Want Ideas? Not afraid of students' ideas?" we introduced ISU as a young collaborative team

of architects, planners, and cultural scientists seeking to encourage our students to think boldly regarding real urban issues, and to work with actors from the urban arena. As a university institute, we want to put our expertise, as well as the creative talent and young energy of our students behind tackling real world problems! The response to our open call was massive. As a result, ISU conducted several cooperative projects with cities such as Berlin, Wolfsburg, Bremen, and Bremerhaven, but also with civic organizations and NGOs such as Gowanus by Design in Brooklyn, New York.

To our great surprise back then, numerous villages and small towns, in particular, were interested in a collaboration with us. Following the open call, we met with representatives from all of the respondents. For the villages, often the mayors themselves came, bringing along their chief planners! We realized the challenges that these rural places are facing display a broad spectrum—much like the cities: massive growth and massive shrinkage alike, the need to revitalize public spaces and vacant buildings, the conversion of brownfield sites, for example old stations or those barracks left by the allied forces, the aesthetic impact of energy production, the improvement of mobility and other regional networks, the provision of vital infrastructures such as health care, schools and kindergartens, or shops, but also how to deal with contamination or (radioactive) waste deposits—all of which have in common a large interest in the sustainable development of their settlement.

With the "Academy of Future Rural Spaces" we brought together students and the representatives and citizens of villages and small towns in Lower Saxony to formulate ideas for their future. The assignments given by the villages themselves were met by a vigorous response from our students, triggering their creativity and design skills. Some proposals went very far in suggesting entirely new landscapes, some were very fine and sensitive in suggesting small and careful interventions. One group made an actual intervention in the village of Brome that is marked by a massive decay of historic houses in its heart. Some of the projects were warmly welcomed by our partners who saw immediate benefits for their municipalities or felt inspired. Some of the most interesting results are presented in the article "Academy of Future Rural Spaces in Lower Saxony." The project was supported by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and TU Braunschweig's Teach4TU program. Currently, we are exploring the possibility of realizing a few more interventions or small projects in our partner municipalities.

An Interdisciplinary Perspective on Rural Spaces

Based on the success of the "Academy of Future Rural Spaces," we developed the teaching format of "Data Mining—Data Mapping." In this interdisciplinary seminar, students from Environmental Sciences and Architecture and Sustainable Design jointly explored the possibility of eco-urban strategies in both urban and rural contexts. In the collaboration, the benefits of ecosystem service-thinking are combined with tools and strategies derived from urban design. That means that the environmental scientists share their expertise on the ecosystem services that open land can provide in relation to its connectivity,

use, and design. The goal is to locate, dimension, and design open spaces with maximum benefit for communities.

In that quest, spatial data and the medium of the map function as the basis for discussions and as an important working tool in the dialogue between students and practice partners who are also involved.

The collaboration with other disciplines made us more aware which critical role rural spaces play in sustainable development—as an inextricably linked counterpart, but also as a complement to the growing city. City and countryside are evermore increasingly mutually reliant. A closer look at the countryside unveils a set of dynamics overlaying and changing rural space, beyond trends of depopulation and the decommissioning of public facilities. The once remote and quiet countryside is now traversed by global and regional flows and dynamics, which are interrelating it with the larger urban system and perhaps even bringing it to the frontline of regional transformation and sustainability. A new set of criteria for understanding and appreciating the rural is required. With "METAPOLIS—an inter- and transdisciplinary platform for sustainable development of urban-rural relations in Lower Saxony," ISU together with seven scientific partners and fourteen municipalities found a research approach for identifying strategies for the sustainable development of urban-rural linkages based on science and validated by participation. "METAPOLIS" is an ongoing research project within the Lower Saxony program "Science for Sustainability" financed by the Volkswagen Foundation "Niedersächsisches Vorab." The notion of metapolis[2] conceptualizes various settlement types—from small villages to large cities—embedded within the landscape matrix and connected via networks of traffic, goods, people, data, and everyday actions. Our approach aims to develop an integrated understanding of this metapolis and its inhabited spaces, landscapes, and residents as well as their mutual relationships at multiple scales. As a spatially, ecologically, socially, and economically structured continuum, metapolis embraces all urban-rural linkages—transgressing the dichotomy of the 'urban' and the 'rural.'

I want to thank the authors for their contributions to this book tackling so many questions that rural spaces face today. We at ISU believe rural spaces are on the design agenda again.

Notes

1 United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. 2014. *World Urbanization Prospects. The 2014 Revision.* New York. https://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/Publications/Files/WUP2014-Highlights.pdf. Accessed June 23, 2016.

2 The term "metapolis" is borrowed from Francoise Ascher (1995).


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SCHWIMMSTEG
Auf den Steg-Elementen
(Im Lang) darf sich nur
jeweils eine Person
aufhalten.
Verletzungsgefahr

Questioning the Urban–Rural Dichotomy

Ruralism and Periphery: The Concept of Ruralism and Discourses on Ruralism in Denmark

Jens Kvorning

The concept of ruralism comprises a number of different dimensions and forms part of various discourses. The original meaning of the term is associated entirely with life in the countryside, often regarded as more indigenous and rustic, and simpler than life in the town or city.[1] But in current discourses, the concept of ruralism is associated with particular lifestyles. It applies to lifestyles characterized by substantial excess, where people wish to rediscover and re-utilize the qualities of country life—most frequently in areas located on the edges of the large urban regions. It also applies to movements in which people wish to develop a new form of life in the countryside, movements which show respect for nature and which seek to construct a new form of sustainable life in the countryside, incorporating social, environmental, and economic sustainability. There are elements of what can be called ruralism that are also associated with an ambition to introduce its way of thinking and practices as a transformational movement in towns and cities.[2]
The American New Ruralism movement has managed to formulate itself in such a way as to become a well-known player on the debate stage.[3] Here, the interest lies in country life in close relationship to cities—most often big cities—and the movement is partly associated with the New Urbanism movement, referring back to the manifestos of the British garden city movement from around 1900.[4] There are precise arguments for having a belt of small production lots surrounding the city to supply vegetables and other agricultural products directly to the city.
Similar movements, intentions, and practices can be found in most European countries. In the Copenhagen

region and in the other metropolitan regions of Denmark, many agricultural enterprises operate in a way that is encompassed by the current understanding of ruralism: secluded luxury or ecological enthusiasm at work on the edge of the major urban regions, but closely integrated into the network and economy of those regions.

However, in its original meaning, ruralism is also included in discourses about the specific problems of the outskirts, where country life is often regarded as something underprivileged. In this context, ruralism emerges not as associated with specific opportunities and qualities, but as a form of modern impoverishment, characterized by forms of life imposed on people in which they do not have access to any number of the opportunities that otherwise characterize contemporary society. In this ruralism discourse, the periphery is seen as something that must be supported in various ways in order to achieve a different and more equal content in life outside the larger urban regions.

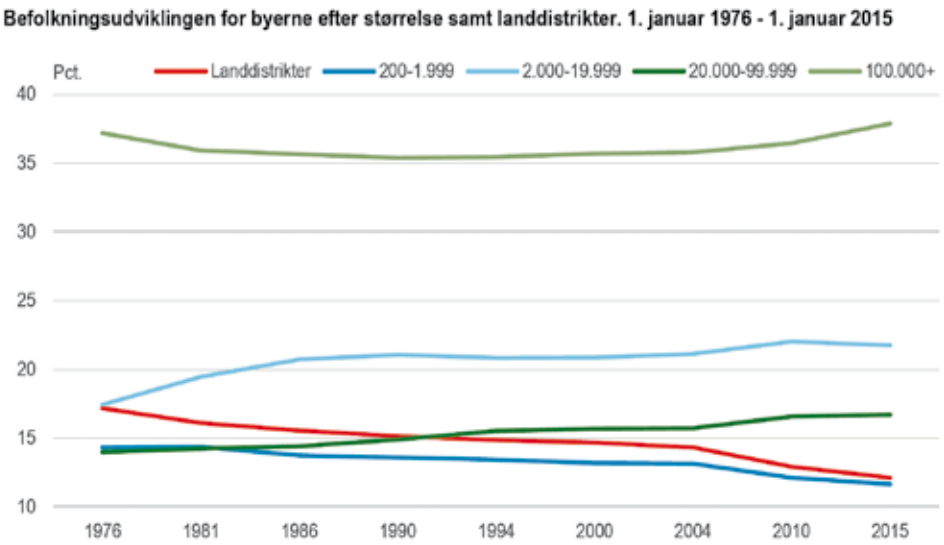
In this political debate in Denmark, people have traditionally referred to a balanced development in the countryside. But the support for what are considered exhausted peripheral regions became a dominant theme, in a new guise, in Danish political discussions leading up to the most recent parliamentary election in 2015. Demands to support the periphery were so strongly worded that it triggered new political briefings and promises of immediate support for the area, which was very imprecisely defined as the periphery. Promises of support were made in the form of relocating state jobs from the Central Administration, as a gesture to signal attention toward an understanding of the problems of the periphery and to increase the number of highly educated people in the peripheral regions. Promises were made of liberalizing the planning laws to facilitate more opportunities for building in open countryside or close to the coast, with the argument that it would lead to new settlements and strengthening of the local economies. Promises were also made to relax environmental regulations that affect agricultural production, with the argument that Danish regulations in this area were supposedly stricter than in other EU countries, thus weakening the competitiveness of Danish agriculture.

What is interesting and paradoxical about these promises is that they suggest quite different future scenarios for the peripheral regions. On one hand, these scenarios are dominated by highly industrialized, large-scale agriculture, operated using large quantities of chemicals. On the other hand, the scenarios focus on small-scale, local food production, and dense local networks.

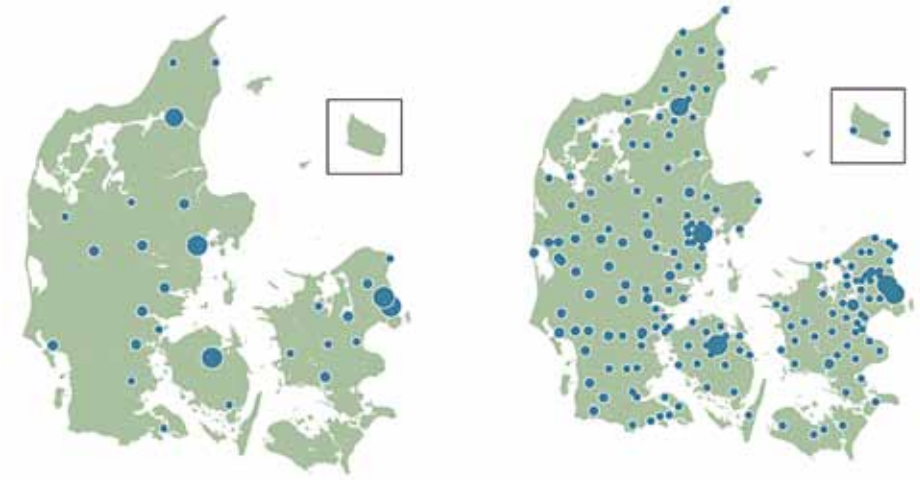
Focus

In this article I will focus on ruralism as it is emerging and discussed in association with the peripheral regions of Denmark and investigate whether it makes any sense to couple the ruralism discourse, which relates to the opportunities at the periphery of the major urban regions, with the issues and attitudes that are present in the regions that do not include large towns and are generally characterized by stagnation or abandonment.

1
For a long time in Denmark there was a fairly constant distribution of people among the different categories of cities, but during the last ten-year period smaller cities, and the geographical periphery in general, have experienced a severe loss of people, which has fueled a lot of debate and protests and a new political interest in the periphery.



2
Scenarios for possible consequences of national migration and changes in commercial service due to increasing internet-trade. The right-hand illustration shows the cities which today have a decent selection of special shops for clothes, electronic goods, etc. The left-hand illustration presents the most radical scenario for 2025 where only a small number of cities will provide this form of services.



Framework for Analysis

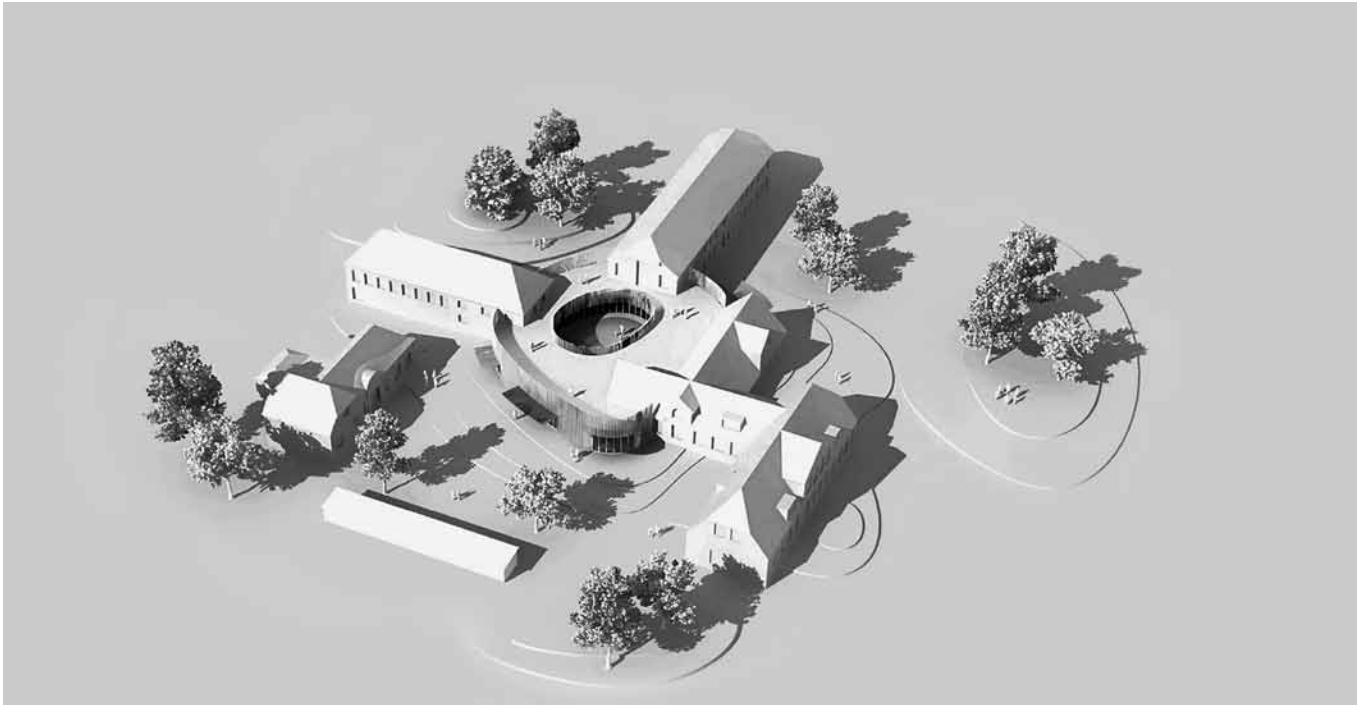
I have characterized the changes in the periphery and country districts into three types of change processes:
A: Concerned with the overall structural development of society—modified forms of production and divisions of labor, the relative significance of agrarian production for the economy, increasing mobility in a broad sense of the word, etc.
B: Concerned with the political attempts to modify the effects of these structural changes.
C: Concerned with lifestyle dimensions and forms of culture.

How Did the Periphery Come into Being?

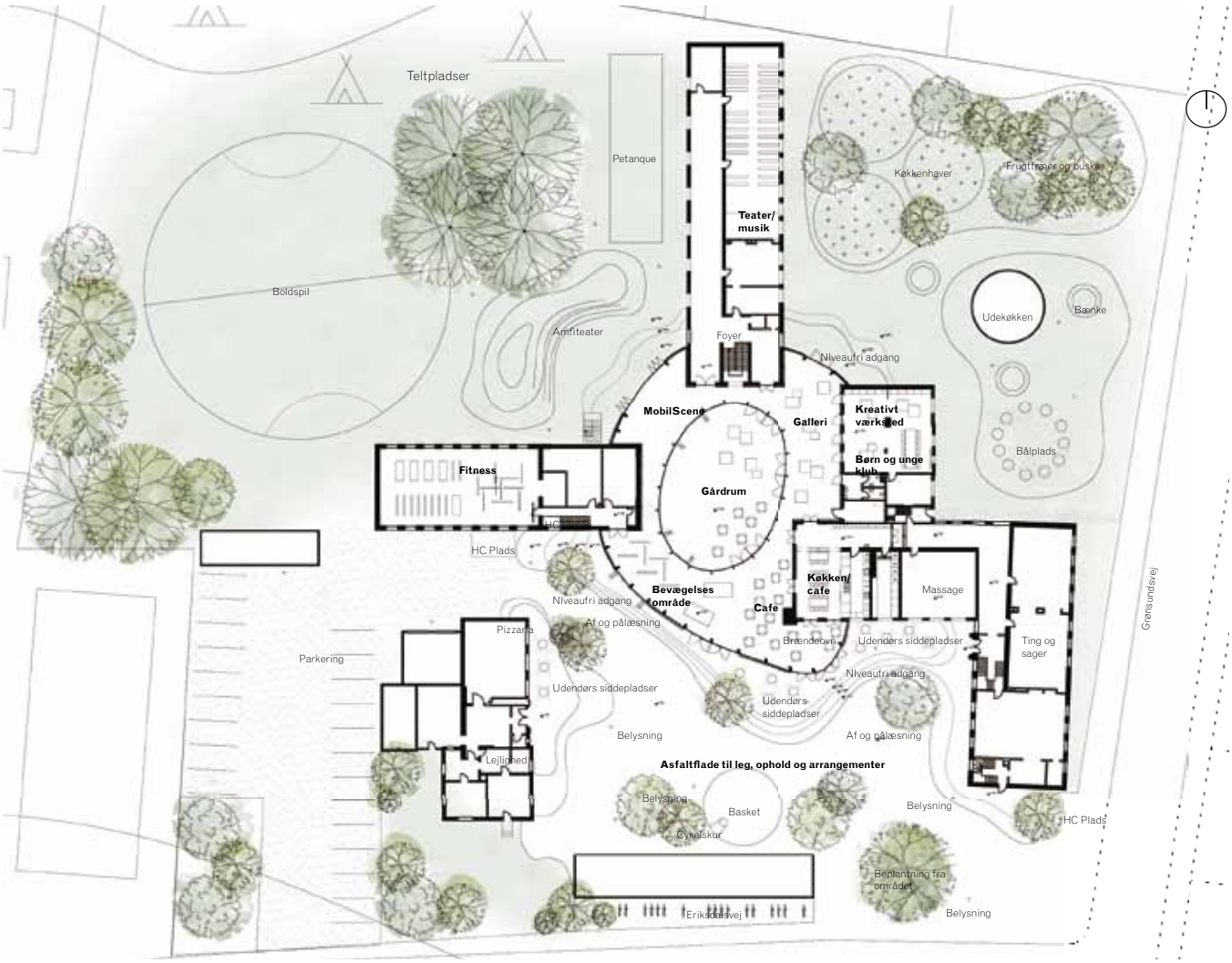
In the late nineteenth century, Danish agricultural production was reoriented so that the emphasis was on animal husbandry and associated processing industries. That meant an increase in the workforce in the countryside, and in the second half of the nineteenth century, rural districts and small towns experienced an increase in population, also helped by the new accessibility created by railways, the formation of new towns linked to the railways, and to a general liberalization (Wichmann Matthiessen 1985; Illeriis 2010). The start of the twentieth century witnessed the development of governmental policies to retain a large rural population. For example, legislation on state smallholdings to increase the proportion of small enterprises (Smidt 1999).[5] Fundamentally, however, the size of the rural population must be regarded as a function of the basic structural conditions.

After World War II, there were significant structural changes in rural areas, and in the smaller and medium-sized towns, which were part of a close division of labor with agriculture. Actual agricultural production was mechanized and rationalized, thus greatly reducing the necessary workforce. The associated processing industries—dairies, abattoirs, farm supply businesses, etc.—were also subject to streamlining and centralization, which were seen, for example, in larger companies and geographical concentrations.[6] At the same time, many of these companies changed from being dominated by local capital to being dominated by national and, in some cases, international capital, which were not tied to the local areas in the same way as before.
However, the substantial reduction of jobs associated with agricultural production, which was a consequence of this change, did not immediately prove to be a significant employment problem for rural districts and small towns because the new industrialization, and the emphasis on consumer goods that occurred after World War II spread throughout the country and, to a great extent, assimilated the workforce that was left over from agriculture.[7] This industry was further supported by various regional planning schemes. Opinion is divided on the effect of these schemes, but they indicate the political interest in the periphery.
During the nineteen-eighties and nineteen-nineties, restructuring towards the post-industrial epoch made a major breakthrough. Industry remained in the peripheral areas, but the new jobs associated with the service and knowledge industries were concentrated in the major urban areas. The number of people receiving

3
In the village of Horbelev the school was closed down some years ago. Local people managed to build up a local organization, which bought the school and developed a project for a culture and educational center. The refurbished buildings will be used for an array of community activities which the local community can organize on their own: Music school, informal child care, meeting places for a lot of activities and local organizations, and spaces for small events. The access area will open up towards the main street and present itself as a new square in this small village and thereby signal a new center and invite people into a new meeting place.



4
The existing school building is connected by a new building with lobby and a small auditorium and event space, plan



5
Visualization of the new access square

a higher education rose sharply and eventually led to shifts in terms of age and qualifications where highly educated people were increasingly concentrated in the major urban areas. Until approximately the turn of the Millennium, there were no dramatic regional shifts in population figures, but behind these figures one can detect regional shifts in the level of education. However, during the two-thousands and the current decade we see the beginning of quite large reductions in population figures in both rural areas and smaller towns and, for the first time, in medium-sized towns as well. There is also a concentration and centralization in both private services and public sector functions, which impair both employment opportunities and the provision of services in many small and medium-sized towns.

It is this new reality that must be regarded as the material basis for the reformulation of calls to support the periphery. But there is also a clear ideological dimension included in the explanation. The post-industrial reality concentrates much of the economic activity in the major urban areas, but it also weakens the opportunities and conditions of the less highly educated. Consequently, the periphery becomes, in a sense, both a geographical phenomenon and a social phenomenon, which, through certain parties, increasingly calls for improvements and changes. These demands are consolidated under a highly complex and multi-faceted concept of periphery. In Denmark, as a consequence of this development, many geographical peripheries have emerged. You can see a semicircle of enfeebled residential areas and municipalities with many poor people very close to central Copenhagen (▶1, 2).

You see a periphery that contains an over-representation of disadvantaged people in West Zealand, immediately outside the greater Copenhagen region. You can also see clear indications of over-representations of poor and low-skilled people in what has traditionally been associated with the concept of periphery: the most peripheral geographical areas in Jutland and on Lolland.

But the new ideological briefings, which point away from the major urban regions, are not only related to hard-pressed social and economic groups. In recent history, there have been significant movements of resourceful groups who worked for what was called decentralization. There are organizations today that are working to develop close local relationships between food production and other economic activities. Without discussing it particularly explicitly, in elements of the Danish debate there is the same overlap with, and embrace of movements found in American discourse, such as slow food, new urbanism, and new ruralism, which are significantly associated with a prosperous middle class: equivalent to a definition which equates ruralism with "The Art of Country Life" (New Ruralism manifesto/www.farmlandinfo.org).

Periphery, Culture, and Economy

For many years, there has been a widely accepted point of view in the academic debate that it makes no sense to distinguish between town and country when it comes to culture in the widest sense of the word (e.g., Nielsen). The argument has been that modern media and communication opportunities, and a high degree of mobility, mean that, even though you reside outside what—from

the point of view of physical and density-related criteria—is described as a town, you are nonetheless part of a comprehensive, modern urban culture. In tandem with this view, the American New Ruralism movement defines itself as a movement that is concerned with "rural land within urban influence" (www.farmlandinfo.org). The question is whether the shifts that have occurred and continue to evolve in terms of regional differences in income and education mean that this widely accepted assertion must be modified if we are to understand the current development and the political formulations. Do these shifts and increased regional differences call for the development of some more differentiated and complex concept of culture in order to detect and comprehend this new reality?[8] Should one work on images of a kind of simultaneous presence of very different cultures and economies in the new peripheries—cultures and economies that absolutely do not, or only slightly interact? Should one also work on an image of the national territory that consists of specialized regions that operate industrial agriculture, and which communicate with global markets and develop specific economies and cultures and small pockets of areas that are oriented towards other markets and are part of other economic and cultural networks? And what consequences does this have on ruralism strategies, as they are developed in the larger urban areas, so that they can be transferred to the periphery?

Ruralism and Periphery

The question then is to what extent the peripheries, which appear in the Danish geographical and social landscape, can deploy the concept of ruralism and the strategies associated with it as an entry point and framework for developing strategies for change? We are faced with a situation in which the concept of ruralism, in the American sense of the word, is relevant and current in terms of the larger urban regions. If you reside in rural areas within these regions, then you, as a producer, have access to a differentiated market, which can absorb many special and luxury products. As a resident, you are part of a region where, equipped with an appropriate degree of mobility, you can access a comprehensive range of commercial and social services and to many cultural offerings. You are also resident in areas, nearly all of which offer many countryside features. So, in this context, ruralism denotes the ability to select a particular niche in which you can live a very comfortable everyday life.
If you reside in one of the outer peripheries, agrarian production is dominated by industrialized, large-scale operation. The dominant political forces are seeking to open things up so that this industrialization can have an even better framework, one of the implications of which is that it is often difficult to get access to the open countryside. As a producer who wishes to provide specialist, quality products you will discover that, by virtue of the social geography, there are only limited markets for such products. You will also often discover that both the social and commercial services are at a low level and that distances are long. That means that the opportunity

to lead a comfortable rural life as a metropolitan regional provider is rarely present.

Ruralism as Strategy

Is the access to ruralism as described so futile when it comes to the outer peripheries, and are they doomed to continued reduction and impoverishment? Ruralism as "The Art of Country Life" has no prospects as a general strategy in the outer regions. However, in my opinion, a number of the elements involved can be rethought and rephrased to make them relevant and practical in a strategy aimed at complementing and enhancing the opportunities for residence and commerce in the outer peripheries.

The assertion on which the following considerations and proposals are based is that there will always be a group of individuals and families who would like to live in open areas, especially if a reasonable level of services, educational options, and social contacts exist. So it is not about achieving dramatic population shifts, but about creating breeding grounds for new settlements and economies. It must be about creating clusters and networks of settlement, commerce, and services, which are sufficiently large and powerful to survive and generate local environments and which can form the context for a substantial everyday life, lived to the full. It is about regarding the periphery as systems or networks of rural districts, villages, and service-providing towns, which together create opportunities for a comfortable, interesting daily life. Something like this cannot be created everywhere. It requires certain terms and conditions. These towns and settlements, and the landscapes they are part of, have different preconditions for supporting a substantial daily life and must be developed according to their capacity to accommodate services, local institutions, or simply local hubs, so that the overall system presents an attractive setting for daily life.

The Countryside

One of the preconditions is that the countryside should be accessible and attractive. You do not move to the country to be near a pig farm or close to gigantic fields with no vegetation other than corn or rapeseed. You move to the country to be close to nature, to have access to nature and to be part of a rhythm different from that which prevails in the city. That means that areas possessing special natural features also possess a special potential to attract new settlement and new types of business. But it is essential for these landscapes to be accessible and to contain great diversity and substantial features for activity. Protected zones along waterways, which have been one of the major sources of contention in recent policy in this area, are a good example of initiatives that can both support greater natural diversity and, in the long term, be used to create coherent access systems to the open countryside. This leads to a clear conflict zone between strategies and policies that want to develop rural districts as zones for large-scale, industrialized production, and strategies that attempt to support new settlement and new businesses linked to features of natural beauty.

In principle, one could imagine a zoning of the country-

side into areas of industrialized agriculture, and areas for expanded recreational and settlement-related use, with an emphasis on rural experience and ecological diversity. But this will still need the natural processes and exchanges between the two zones to be respected in the form of relevant stipulations for each of these zones of production.

Active, Social Environments

General national policies can create preconditions for new developments, but they will only become a reality if local forces band together and exploit these opportunities. That is why it is crucial for local organizations to emerge to tackle projects and activities that are meaningful in the local context and that can develop locally funded potential for action. In Denmark, there are a number of examples of such local organizations, which have managed to generate changes and mobilizations, and have then been able to trigger broader and further-reaching processes of change.

Local Institutions

A topical and relevant foundation for the creation of local organizations in terms of important local issues is to open up and develop the institutions so that they are given a bigger role in the local community than their primary function gives them. This strategy is particularly crucial if a town is so small that commercial services are on the point of disappearing. In this case, the environment, which can be created around the kindergarten, school or sports hall, can emerge as a social meeting and compression point, and can replace the role of the shop. But the fact that there is a local compression point can also help the shop to endure, precisely by virtue of the meeting point.
Creating a compression point consisting of a kindergarten and a sports hall can invest a village with a center and identity and, hence, the strength to survive. Opening up the school and its sports facilities can create an important center in a slightly larger town. These strategies have successfully been deployed in a number of small towns in Denmark, where they have been used in various combinations with a medical center, a municipal service center, a center where people can collect items they have bought online, etc. (▶3–5).

Tourism

There are many empty agricultural properties in the peripheral regions, and there are many empty houses in the smaller towns. These buildings represent a potential for second homes and for more traditional countryside tourism. Many municipalities have been reluctant to facilitate such use because property prices would rise and make it more difficult for local first-time buyers to buy a house. However, there are so many empty houses that, in most places, this reservation is no longer particularly relevant. Many more of the empty houses require considerable investment in order to become decent homes. Some of the political indications and promises, which were made in the lead-up to the most recent parliamentary election, were about facilitating new settlement opportunities in

the open countryside because it was considered an opportunity both for attracting new permanent residents and for generating more tourism. However, the effect of such opportunities for new settlement would be that the financial incentive to renovate existing buildings, or demolish them and build new ones on the same sites, would disappear and the risk of further slums developing would emerge. Therefore, making empty houses available for weekend and tourist use should be regarded as a promising strategy in areas that also have an attractive countryside.

Tourism and Business

Tourism always has a commercial dimension. Someone earns money by renting out the house while other people earn money by selling the goods and services that are used during the stay. But there are some Danish examples where the commercial dimension has been further developed. Some define this expanded context as leisure clusters: a geographical concentration of companies, associations, groups, and individuals (who interact in various ways). One of the examples, to which this definition refers, has been called *Cold Hawaii*.[9] It is an environment that came about after a number of professional surfers settled in a highly traditional fishing village on the west coast of Jutland in Northern Denmark. After observing one another for a number of years, things ended up in a very productive working relationship between the traditional fishing population and the surfer incomers. This has changed the culture and the image of the village, making it, for example, much more attractive in the eyes of young people than in the past. But people also learned how to organize themselves and engage in fruitful cooperation with public authorities on a number of initiatives for change. That, in turn, meant that the village has been able to arrange various major events and has been able to deal with tourists and other visitors better than before, which has meant a significant contribution to its economic base.

Culture and Empowerment

The *Cold Hawaii* example mentioned above makes it clear that a policy of ruralism is very much about developing local cultures, enabling the local community to take initiatives and act, and to fruitfully interact with and absorb the cultures associated with tourism and second homes (Zukin 1993).[10] These aspects are covered both by discourses on locality cultures and by discourses on empowerment.

Ruralism and Periphery: Conclusion

The basis for this article was the question of whether the current discourse on ruralism is in any way relevant in terms of the way the problems of rural districts emerge in what can be defined as the periphery or peripheries. In its American version, ruralism or new ruralism is associated with major urban regions and also most closely linked to areas and lifestyles that are financially comfortable. Consequently, the relevance seems to be limited in relation to areas defined by the fact that part of the population is financially hard-pressed and the services

required to support both settlement and commerce are scarce. However, there are major overlaps with the strategies that are often promoted by ecological movements or organizations that are directly concerned with the problems of the peripheries, and you can also see slow-food movements and many other proposals to deal with the problems of agriculture and fringe areas catching on to strategies that very much resemble the ruralism movement; strategies that combine sustainability in both the environmental and the social sense with local food production and food of high quality and a high degree of processing.[11] But throughout the country you can also see an increasing number of farm shops, which can be regarded as living exponents of such a strategy.

So there is not necessarily any contradiction between the periphery and the content of the ruralism strategy, but the different contexts mean that the strategies must be tackled differently—not only because the economic potential is weaker in the periphery, but also because local cultures are not immediately oriented towards strategies of this kind. Consequently, the question of whether it is possible to build up a local potential for action is absolutely crucial. We must basically acknowledge that strategies of this kind work most easily in areas with major nature-related features. Thus, it should also be said that there are probably villages that must be abandoned and demolished, and rural districts that must remain very sparsely populated.

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Notes

1 Both the Oxford English Dictionary and most online dictionaries define the word as: "That, which relates to, or characterizes life in the country." Several, including dictionary.com, expand upon the term with meanings such as "unsophisticated, rough, rustic, unpolished etc."

2 Some of the organizations categorize 'urban gardening' with the term ruralism to describe their activities. E.g. Landlife in Liverpool—but also many others.

3 The Institute of Urban & Regional Development at Berkeley University has formed a Department of New Ruralism, which has produced one of the best-known manifestos for New Ruralism.

4 They refer both to Ebenezer Howard's two versions of *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (1898 and 1902) and to the many additional manifestos that came from national garden city companies.

5 The first State Smallholdings Act was adopted in 1899. As a consequence of this and subsequent legislation, 28,000 smallholdings were established according to Torben Smidt's: *Vi vil rejse nye huse*.

6 For example, there were approximately 1,800 dairies around 1930. Today, there are approximately seventy production units (see Danmarkshistorien.dk).

7 If you regard rural areas and smaller towns as one, we are not seeing greater reductions in the population in what can be described as the functional rural areas. Statistics Denmark.

8 Increased regional differences do not cover dramatic changes in amounts, but different experiences in living conditions and accessibility to cultural and social services.

9 In Denmark, the concept and strategy of the "leisure cluster" has been described and developed in particular by the Danish Centre for Rural Research at the University of Southern Denmark.

10 In many of her books (including *Landscapes of Power* and *Cultures of Cities*), the American sociologist Sharon Zukin has dealt with the significance of local cultures for an urban community's capacity to aim towards new conditions.

11 For example, see diverse manifestos from the Association of Danish Small Islands and similar organizations.

Living in a Small Town: An Urban and a Rural Experience at Once

Annett Steinführer

Introduction

Germany is a highly urbanized country. The estimated share of urban population is dependent upon definitions of *rural* and *urban* and thus ranges in relevant statistics from between forty-eight and eighty-two percent. Yet, less than one third of inhabitants actually live in cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. Small towns—with 5,000 to 20,000 inhabitants and, usually, a lower centrality function for their surroundings—are home to about thirty percent of the population. Yet, their residential experience is structurally ignored, as urban studies focus on cities and metropolises, while rural studies are traditionally interested in the village as the seemingly predominant type of rural settlement. For centuries, small towns used to be the centers of rural areas. They provided economic, administrative, and cultural functions for their surroundings and possessed a level of self-esteem for being urban. As settlements with specific legal privileges, they have often persisted since the Middle Ages, and they do so even when facing severe economic and population decline as many rural regions in Germany have since the nineteen-nineties. These processes were caused by structural economic problems and also have an impact on the functions and functioning of small towns. Marginalization and peripheralization are prominent concepts currently applied in regional studies to explain small-town development in disadvantaged regions. This paper goes beyond these conceptualizations and argues that ruralization and above-average aging are further trends to be considered. All of these tendencies will continue

to influence the simultaneous urban-rural character of small towns.

Defining the Small Town

Everyone who is dealing with small towns time and again faces the question about the population size of these settlements. As simple—or even banal—as this problem might seem, there is no standard solution to it. Interestingly, the search for the answer leads back to the heyday of European urbanization in the late nineteenth century. In 1887, the first session of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) defined three categories of settlement. Based on a decision already taken during the ISI founding meeting in 1885, the lowest limit set was a population of 2,000. All settlements with fewer residents were called *countryside (campagne)*. The upper boundary of 100,000 inhabitants was reserved for a newly denominated urban form: the *cities (grandes villes)*. The settlements and social realities between these two poles were simply called *towns (villes)* (Körösi 1887, 212). About ten years earlier, the official statistics of the newly founded (1871) German Empire had already made use of the new statistical conceptualization of urban settlements. At that time, such an "increasingly positivist" definition (Matzerath 1985, 241) had become necessary as the traditional legal concept of the town was fading away with the fundamental societal changes in the course of industrialization and political turmoil. As early as 1877, the German Statistics Agency applied the same size range as used today (Matzerath 1985, 246): The smallest urban form was designated as a range of 5,000 to 20,000 inhabitants and called *Kleinstadt* (small town). The number of 100,000 inhabitants was used as the upper limit, and 2,000 as the lower limit. Interestingly, while *Kleinstadt* found its way into daily German language, the denomination *Mittelstadt* (medium-sized town) for the next category in size—above a population of 20,000 but below 100,000—remains a term used until today only in statistics and planning documents.

The nineteenth-century statistical definition that aimed at replacing the old legal term of *town* has never been entirely convincing. In Central Europe, the settlement type of interest to this paper is usually characterized by an urban fabric with a market square at the center, a town hall, and the remains of the medieval fortification (also in persistent form of a ring street or a promenade) around this center (Hannemann 2004, 21; see also ▶1). These physical structures provided built evidence of the borough rights (*Stadtrecht*) granted to these settlements by an emperor. Thus, small towns in Central Europe often have a century-long non-agrarian—i.e., urban—history with a local bourgeoisie, a developed division of labor, and socio-spatial differentiation. Also today, their economic basis differs and ranges from commerce, handicraft, and industry to tourism. Only as an exception does agriculture play a decisive role. Historically, small towns might be further differentiated according to their predominant character, be it a rural town (e.g., *Ackerbürgerstadt*), a spa town, a white-collar town (e.g., *Beamtenstadt*), an ex-urban residential area, or a military center. Today, such one-dimensional categorizations rarely contribute to an adequate description.

1
Herzberg am Harz…

2
...a typical small
town in Germany

Yet, the type of settlement of interest to this paper is not only characterized by a certain size (or *smallness*), architectural fabric, or historical and socio-economic features. Rather, "excess importance" (Christaller 2006/1933, 26) needs to be considered in order to define rural small towns. This relates to some economic, administrative, and/or cultural relevance not only for the immediate small-town population, but also for its surroundings. The German planning system reinforces this role in most states by attributing the lowest rank of the planning hierarchy (*Grundzentrum*) to such municipalities (BBSR 2012). Finally, also the geographic position—accessibility to an urban agglomeration—is decisive for the socio-economic character and pathways of small towns.
For the purposes of this paper, small town is defined as a settlement with between 5,000 to 15,000 inhabitants, a non-agrarian economic basis, and a centrality function for its rural surroundings. It has a core with an urban fabric and is surrounded by villages that were, at least in part, incorporated into the administrative boundaries of the municipality in the course of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The main focus is on small towns in more or less peripheral rural areas, not on small towns within metropolitan regions.

The Under-researched Small Town

Small Towns in Urban Studies

When rapid urbanization brought about a new quantity and quality of urban life in the nineteenth century, the city was increasingly considered as its normal expression. The small town, then, was needed to contrast the extraordinary speed, density, and disruptions of the new agglomerations. In Georg Simmel's essay "The Metropolis and Mental Life," published in 1903, one finds a number of stereotypes of the life and social relations in non-metropolitan contexts. Simmel described the small town as a sphere of life which "is, in the main, enclosed within itself" and characterized by "trivialities and prejudices which bind the small town person" (Simmel 1995/1903, 126).[1] According to Simmel, mental life in the small town "rests more on feelings and emotional relationships" (Ibid., 117). The small-towner knows almost everybody he or she meets and has a positive relationship with everybody (Ibid., 122). Simmel's text, an essay, was written without any empirical basis. He was not interested in the small town, but only in the new phenomenon of the city (in his case Berlin) with its particular mental expressions, metropolitan way of life, and differentiated division of labor. In order to make the underlying social changes even more impressive, he contrasted the city with a residual category that he called "the small town and rural existence" (Ibid., 117) in the same breath.
Thus, Simmel's concept of the small town is not a definition. Yet, at least in Germany, it strongly influenced urban research. I argue that the essay was a foundation for the almost exclusive focus of German urban sociology on the city by assigning the small town to the countryside and thus separating it from urban research. Considering the time of its first publication, it is also interesting that the stereotypes formulated by Simmel can be linked to widespread nineteenth-century accounts of the small town. These were mirrored in—or maybe even influenced by—the highly successful theater play

The German Small-towner by August von Kotzebue (*Die deutschen Kleinstädter*; first published in 1803; Kotzebue 2008). This play stereotypically portrays life in a small town where everyone knows and gossips about everybody else, and strong prejudices rule mutual behaviors. These fundamental motives strongly resemble Simmel's descriptions. One can, therefore, assume that Simmel's text, or at least its perception, could build upon a shared understanding of the small town. At least in part, these stereotypes still persist today.

In post-WWII western Germany, there was some geographic research on small towns, while urban sociology established a position of willful ignorance (Pro-Regio-Online 2005, 115). The few exceptions of recent in-depth research on small towns (Niedermeyer 2000; Hannemann 2004) had almost no impact on urban studies as such. This means that small-town research, with its specific focus, has always had a unique position, but does not seem to have contributed to genuine topics of urban research such as socio-spatial differentiation, social exclusion, or urban governance.

Small Towns in Rural Studies

Rural sociology and geography, on the other hand, were and are even less interested in the small town. One of their traditional efforts is to define the object or subject of rural studies as such, be it countryside, country, the rural or, in recent years, rurality (Cloke 2006). Due to their very nature, these terms need the *urban* as a counterpart to characterize the *rural* as something "other-than-urban" (Ibid., 18), which remains difficult due to its diversity and multiplicity. The widespread idea today of a rural-urban continuum was discussed as early as in the nineteen-forties (Miner 1952) and focused on the cultural and material urbanization of the countryside that led to changed lifestyles and new infrastructure. In 1918, the agricultural economist Charles Galpin had coined the term *rurban* (Galpin 1918, 64)[2] in order to point to the strong influences of urban life, its institutions and agents, on rural life. Today, there is a widespread consensus that the urban-rural distinction, first and foremost, relates to deeply rooted narratives, while social practices are faced with and, at the same time, further contribute to, a "blurring of conventional boundaries between country and city" (Cloke 2006, 18).

The rural-urban or urban-rural continuum is not thought of as a continuum of settlements. Rather, it is once more the *city* which is taken as the apparently "natural" opposite of rurality. Consequently, rural studies in large part considers the village as the typical and, more or less, the only relevant type of rural locality. Rooted in the primary interest of rural research in agriculture and its changes in the course of the twentieth century, the small town was apparently too urban or, to put it differently, "too big" and "not sufficiently rural" (Pro-Regio-Online 2005, 115). In its first edition in 1993, one of the (few) German textbooks on rural studies by Henkel did not deal with small towns at all according to its index. In its revised (fourth) edition from 2004, small and medium-sized towns were referred to as an "essential element of the rural landscape of settlements" (Henkel 2004, 255). According to Henkel, for centuries, towns had a predominantly agrarian function and were therefore called *Ackerbürgerstadt*—farming town with a specific social structure (Ibid., 257). Thus,

even in this conceptualization, only a specific type of small town—that with an economic basis in agriculture—was highlighted.

In summary, with regard to both urban and rural studies—at least in Germany—one can speak of a "double negation" of the small town (Pro-Regio-Online 2005, 115). This is all the more striking as there are regions in Germany, for example in the northeast, in which it is rather the small town and not the city, which is the typical expression of urban life (Benke 2001, 2).

Small Towns in Germany

Statistical Perspective

According to the UN statistics and based upon national data, Germany in 2014 had an urban population of seventy-five percent (UN DESA 2015, 200). Interestingly, and in contrast with the definitions of many other European countries, this number is based upon population density—at least 150 inhabitants per square kilometer—and not on absolute numbers.[3] Yet, a competing approach finds a forty-eight percent urban population (according to the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, BMEL 2016) while Eurostat (2013) distinguishes between "predominantly urban" and "intermediate" regions (with in 2010 forty-two percent of the population each). Besides (political) intentions to either enlarge or diminish one type or the other, these differences once again underscore the difficulties—or even impossibility—of clearly distinguishing *the urban* and *the rural* in an urbanizing world.

Another approach to the question of rural or urban reveals that in 2013, ninety-four percent of all settlements in Germany had less than 20,000 inhabitants. These might be rural communities or small towns. The Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs, and Spatial Development (BBSR) applies a more sophisticated, mixed statistical-functional definition and distinguishes four basic types of settlements (▶3). These are, by and large, still oriented on the 1887 population limits but also take centrality functions into account. According to this definition, about thirty percent of the German population is living in small towns with 5,000 to 20,000 inhabitants and/or an official function as a central place (i.e., usually a *Grundzentrum* which is the lowest rank of the German planning hierarchy).

However, these numbers reveal little about the concrete settlement structures and nothing concerning the social realities of the inhabitants. The second and third columns of the table, that distinguish between the number of municipalities and that of local authority associations (*Gemeindeverbände*), give a slight hint of the realities behind the numbers: almost 4,500 individual municipalities form 2,100 associated small towns in Germany. The maximum number of associated communities is forty-nine—and even this figure greatly underestimates the quantitative amount of districts and villages that administratively belong to small towns today. This issue will be taken up below when the trend of ruralization is discussed in more detail.

Everyday Life Experience

This paper is based on long-term research in a number of small towns all over Germany, and particularly takes two in-depth studies completed in 2012 (Steinführer

3
Basic data on the settlements in Germany and their administrative structure (as of 2013)

	Number of municipalities	**Number of local authorities associations** (*Gemeinde-verbände*)	**Population in 1,000**	**Population in percent**	**Surface area in percent**
Cities	76	76	25,031.4	31.0	3.7
Medium-sized towns	772	603	22,917.8	28.4	15.3
Small towns	4,480	2,105	23,889.8	29.6	44.9
Rural communities (*Landgemeinden*)	5,907	1,783	8,928.4	11.1	36.1
Sum	11,235	4,567	80,767.4	100.0	100.0

et al. 2014) into account as well as an ongoing research project in eight localities (2015–17). In the course of these investigations, forty-six semi-structured interviews were conducted so far with decision-makers and volunteers. In summary, the interviews mirror the wide range of possible self-classifications. Avoiding more detail, two quotations shall illustrate this claim:

> "So there are many Berliners who have moved here forever…. Here a stranger does not stand out, because every day here is a holiday, so to speak …. This is important, you know, there are quite a few [new residents], maybe in a place where everybody knows everybody else, this would be more difficult, you know."

(interview with a senior citizen volunteer in small town B in 2012).

> "And I think that here by us, in the often-cited rural area, this sense of belonging together is more extreme than in bigger cities. So everybody tries to help everybody else. Meaning we still have neighborly help."

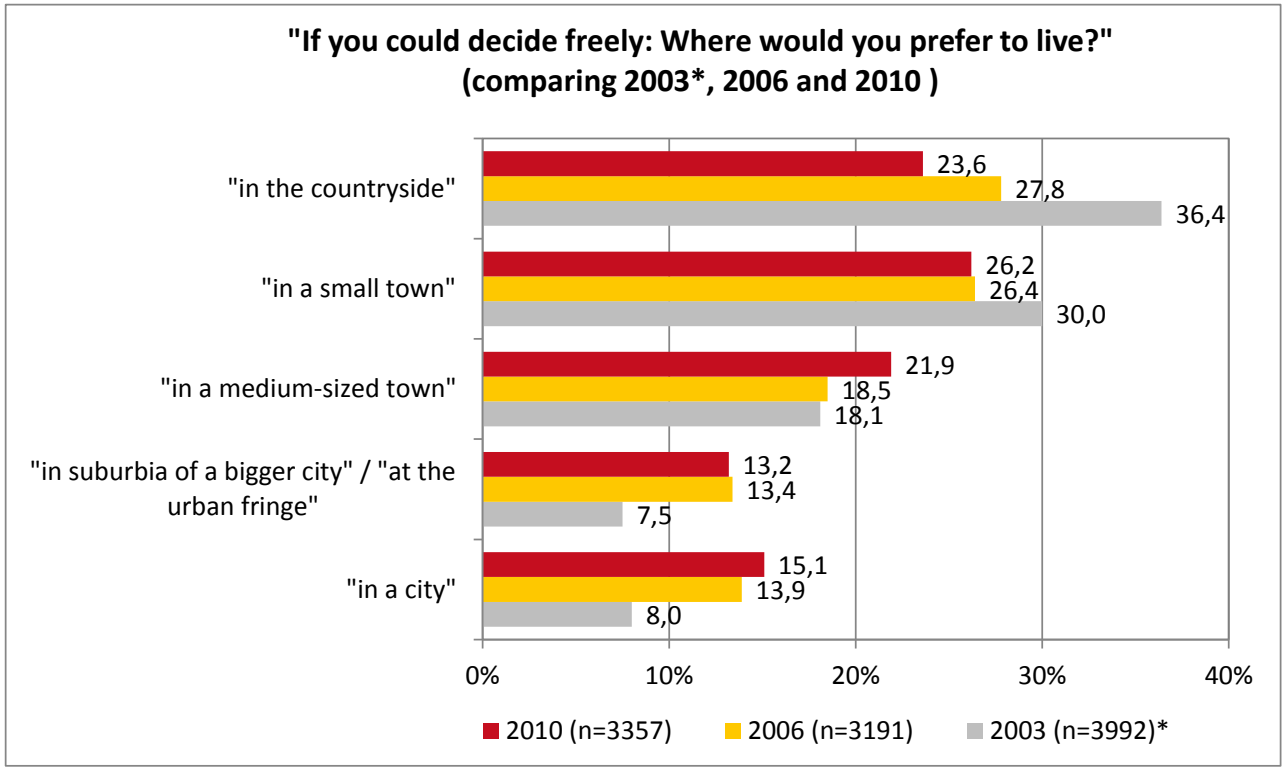
(interview with the mayor of small town A in 2015).

These contrasting statements underline, on the one hand, that from the subjective perspective of a small-town resident, both rural and urban conceptualizations of the place are possible. While the first quotation strongly—and surprisingly—resembles Simmel's claim of metropolis-specific anonymity (Simmel 1903/1995), the second, with its emphasis on strong social and emotional networks, ties up the traditional narratives of rurality. On the other hand, the statements also need to be contextualized: while the first relates to a spa town where tourists and guests are frequent, the second talks about an industrial—and today almost de-industrialized—town with a number of incorporated villages. Thus, the quotes also mirror the diversity of small-town histories and present socio-economic characteristics.

One of the most amazing features of small towns is probably their historical persistence despite far-reaching societal transformations. This also holds true in the short run: Germany has been facing a phase of reurbanization since the early 2000s, from which particularly the cities and metropolitan areas have benefited. This change is also evident in Figure 4 with the positive connotations concerning living in cities significantly increasing between 2003 and 2010 (▶4). The *countryside*, in contrast, was decisively losing in stated popularity, just like suburbia did before it. Preferences with regard to urban living beyond the metropolis, however, stayed more or less unchanged, at least regarding its quantitative extent. Thus, as a desired place of residence, the small town is attractive to a certain portion of the population. This finding is supported by Fertner et al. (2015) who, based on research in Denmark, call this phenomenon "residential urbanism" in contrast with economic or "job-created urbanism." As for Germany, and not surprisingly, the highest popularity of small-town living in 2010 was formulated by small-towners (thirty-nine percent of them also preferring to live in a small town) but also by inhabitants of medium-sized towns (thirty-two percent) in contrast with eighteen percent of the inhabitants of rural communities and ten percent of the city dwellers, respectively.

4
Stated preferences concerning locations for living (representative survey for Germany)

*The 2003 data is only to a limited degree comparable with 2006/2010, as the question wording and categories slightly differed from the later surveys.



Tendencies of Small-town Development: Marginalization/Peripheralization, Ruralization, and Above-average Aging

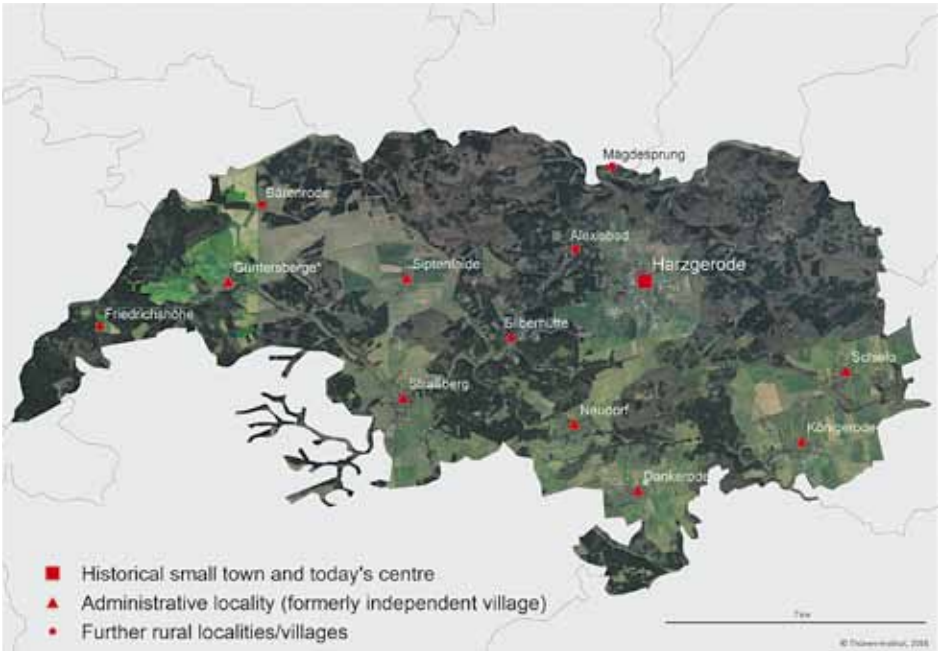
The recent German discourse on non-metropolitan regions was strongly influenced by the decades after the reunification in 1990. Regional studies focused in particular on the extreme cases of deindustrialization and far-reaching functional losses of East German settlements—"de-collectivization" in agriculture, "de-administration" and "de-militarization" (Hannemann 2004, 83–87)—with their subsequent mass out-migration and aging, as well as further economic decline. In order to conceptualize the specific development of small towns in eastern Germany before and after 1990, Hannemann applied the term *marginalization*, meaning their social and economic exclusion from global and even national networks (Ibid., 11–12). At the same time, she embedded the transition of small towns in eastern Germany into their *longue durée* by highlighting two earlier phases of marginalization: nineteenth-century industrialization (with the decision to connect the town to the newly developing railway network or not) and the post-WWII period. Post-socialist transition, then, led to far-reaching economic and demographic decline (BBSR 2012, 80–92). But Hannemann did not end up finding evidence for small-town deficits. Rather, she argued that marginalization might relate to a certain potential, i.e., a "culture of marginality" that allows for a productive handling of unfavorable conditions (Hannemann 2004, 312–13). She found small towns to be characterized by a stable local integration and strong internal social capital. Her formula was "spatially feasible in size [*überschaubar*] and socially close" (Ibid., 312).

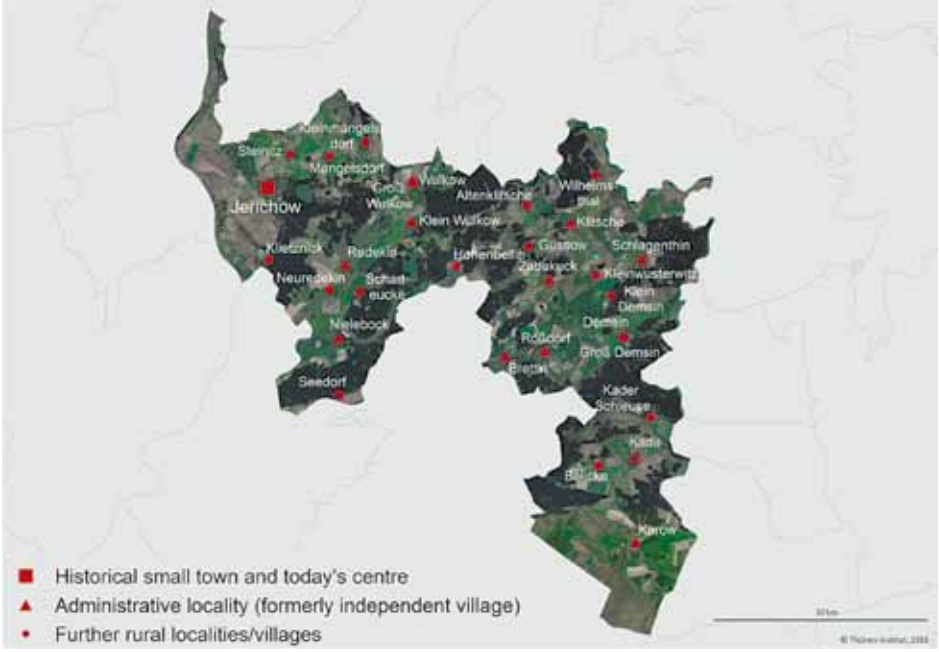
A similar argument is emphasized by the discourse on *peripheralization* which has gained particular prominence in Germany since the mid-2000s (Fischer-Tahir and Naumann 2013; Kühn 2015). In contrast with the earlier debates on (inner) peripheries, peripheralization highlights the process character of negative economic and demographic developments as well as the decoupling of peripheralized regions from the economic dynamics of the agglomerations and their financial dependency on these centers. Small towns are not a major issue in this debate, and yet, some research was devoted to the stigmatization of small towns as an effect or companion of socio-spatial peripheralization (Bürk 2013; Steinführer and Kabisch 2007).

But marginalization and peripheralization are not the only trends that shape small-town presents and futures. Two further tendencies need to be highlighted: ruralization and above-average aging. The small-town definition applied in this paper already refers to a certain inherent rural character of present-day small towns. Due to administrative reforms, particularly in the second half of the twentieth century, urban settlements incorporated stepwise their surrounding villages and grew in surface area. While in cities the former villages were usually physically transformed, in smaller towns the rural character of the newly incorporated localities often persists. With the economic decline and demographic shrinkage of the majority of small and medium-sized towns (not only) in rural areas in eastern Germany after 1990, a new wave of far-reaching administrative

5
Today's settlement structure of the small towns Jerichow and Harzgerode (Saxony-Anhalt)

* Before being incorporated into the enlarged municipality of Harzgerode, Güntersberge used to be an independent small town on its own (called as such as early as in the mid-fifteenth century).





and spatial reforms occurred, leading to ever-larger settlements. The state of Saxony-Anhalt is a pioneer of this development. While in 1990 the state counted 1,367 municipalities, by 2011 this number had shrunk to 219. *Ruralization*, i.e., an increasingly rural character of most small and medium-sized towns, is a major consequence of the related settlement reforms. This is also reflected by the state chancellery when stating: "while in 2010, there still were towns and many rural communities, today in the majority there are structures that do not allow for a separation between urban and rural [*Stadt und Land*]" (Sachsen-Anhalt 2016). The biggest of these new municipalities is Hansestadt Gardelegen with about 23,000 inhabitants (2014) in forty-nine districts on 632 square kilometers. Concerning surface area, it ranks in the third place after Berlin and Hamburg in the whole of Germany. Not only is the urban character of such settlements getting blurred, also one of the main connotations of small towns (their feasibility in size) is being lost. The same holds true for the two small towns Jerichow—with about 8,000 inhabitants in 2014 on 270 square kilometers—and Harzgerode—with 7,000 inhabitants on 165 square kilometers—which are displayed in Figure 5 (▶**5**).

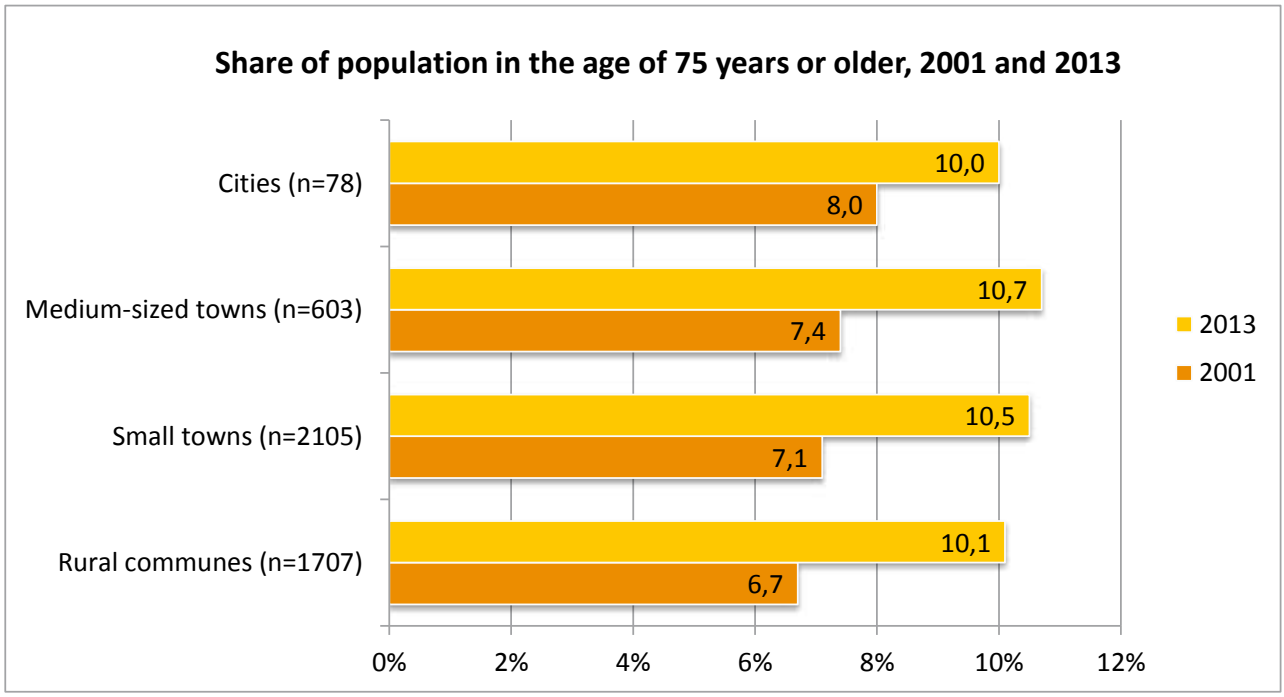
Last but not least, the issue of aging—more precisely *above-average aging*—needs to be highlighted. Aging is part of the demographic change and in Germany affects all types of settlements. From Figure 6 it becomes obvious that small and medium-sized towns in 2013 had on average the highest share of residents aged seventy-five years or older (▶**6**). Yet, with regard to future developments it is even more relevant to have a look at the changes between 2001 and 2013: while the cities started with the highest levels in 2001 (with eight percent of the population seventy-five years or older), about one decade later they had the lowest percentage in comparison with all other types of settlement (ten percent). Here, the relative rise of this age group was twenty-five percent, whereas in all other types of settlement it was about fifty percent. There is some explorative evidence that this tendency is further reinforced due to selective in-migration of the oldest-elderly—about eighty years or older—into the central parts of rural towns (Rößler/Kunz 2010).

Conclusion

Urbanization was one of the major transformations of the twentieth century—and even suburbanization proved to be part of the overall *qualitative* urbanization of the whole society. Urban lifestyles disseminated far beyond the city's borders and became ubiquitous. The rural narrative, however, has not lost in attraction, and the urban-rural dichotomy remains meaningful in popular discourses.

In this persisting pattern of contrasting *urban* and *rural*—usually meaning city versus village—a decisive element of the Central European settlement system is being structurally faded out: the small town. This paper argues that it is an under-researched issue of urban and rural studies alike. As a rule, small towns are located somewhere between the village and the city. Yet, they are neither miniature nor failed cities. Rather, they represent a specific socio-spatial reality and location attracting residential preferences by a stable share of the population.

6
Aging in different types of settlements in Germany (2001 and 2013)



Small towns allow for both rural and urban living, a trend which is further strengthened by tendencies of ruralization. Future research needs to pay particular attention to aging, as never before in small-town history have there been so many elderly inhabitants with their specific needs and demands. Whether and how processes of marginalization and peripheralization of rural small towns will be reinforced or reversed by expected and unexpected sociodemographic processes will be issues for future small-town research to address.

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Notes

1 All English translations were taken from the open access publication of Simmel's essay provided by Harvard University (http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic1412058.files/Introduction/SimmelMetropolis.pdf; last access: June 10, 2016). The page numbers quoted refer to the 1995 version of the German original.

2 I owe this hint to Sorokin and Zimmerman (1929, 611).

3 Similarly, Austria, France, Romania, Slovenia and Sweden use functional and/or more complex socio-demographic and economic definitions. For the famous UN urban-rural dichotomy, the majority of European countries either set a population minimum (from 200 inhabitants in Denmark to 20,000 in The Netherlands; n=17) or count the inhabitants in settlements officially designated as urban (n=16) (see: http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/CD-ROM/WUP2014_DOCUMENTATION/WUP2014-DataSource-UrbanPopulation.xls; last access: February 8, 2016).

Rurality in a Society of Cities

Claudia Oltmanns

References to the rural and the village can be found everywhere: on supermarkets' magazine racks, in book or record stores, on television, while walking in the park, on restaurant menus, in urban architecture, or in everyday practice. The village or rurality is currently booming in popular culture, and more recently also in academia after it had disappeared almost entirely for many years from the (academic) perception, only being mentioned as a dying breed (Cf. Cocozza 2012; Nell and Weiland 2014) The rural is a matter of different discursive practices or artistic language games, instruments of different projects, and of touristic and political origin, but in either case of economic nature. The village forms a backdrop against which life experiences can be formulated: desires and fears may appear and last but not least the question of the possibilities and limitations of a good life can be negotiated. (Cf. Nell and Weiland 2014, 14)

The village represents more than just a specific form of settlement or a place of residence for people. It seems obvious that the village in the present is seen as something that needs care and protection, and that could become extinct. The habitat of a village offers an experiential space that corresponds to the subjective reality of the majority of people. It is a result of certain traditions, but the individual imagination has a large share in it too. Villages are threatened by internal disintegration. Keywords are demographic change, educational migration, spatial mobility and flexibility, deagrarisation, etc. At the same time, villages apparently rise again in the social and artistic imagination (Ibid.).

This raises the question: Do cultural images of the rural have an impact on the realities of rural life?

My Research

During my research, I spent a total of six months in two northern German villages, taking part in associations, sports clubs, events, and so on. I accompanied some of the inhabitants in their daily lives—while shopping, walking the dog, working in the garden, etc.[1] The rest of the year, I lived in a suburb of a small town of 20,000 inhabitants. I mention this because it tremendously raised my awareness of my topic. I analyzed the performances through a lens capturing both the positionality of the specific actors as well as their practices and experiences. Furthermore, staged events such as performances, repeated everyday practices, and life histories are examined to reveal embodied conceptions of space and rurality.

My research does not claim to have access to rurality, but seeks access to representations of rurality in the form of narratives, images, and discourses.[2] Rurality is produced and reproduced through discourses, actors, material environments, and performances. The British geographer Andy C. Pratt sums up this view:

"Though we may not be able to point to a 'true' rurality, it may be possible to identify certain discourses about rurality that serve to enable and support the reproduction of particular uneven social relations, economic distributions, and social stratifications."

(Pratt 1996)

Walking in the Countryside or How the Urban-Rural Dichotomy is Perpetuated by Walkers

With the advent of cheap travel in the eighteenth and nineteenth century and a regularized work week with leisure time, going for a walk became a popular leisure-time pursuit. Walking in the countryside is still widely conceived as a practice that releases the urban body from the falsities of urban life. (Cf. Csordas 1994)

From time to time, groups of tourists or couples follow a hiking trail that covers a distance of about 130 kilometers. They follow a route that begins at the northwestern coast. On their journey, they pass one of my chosen villages where they spend a day at the local inn. Although it seems the most 'natural' mode of movement through space, walking is informed by various performative norms which produce distinct practices and dispositions. Walking implies "movement through space in conventionally stylized ways" (Adler 1989, 1375), instructed by signs along the way.

Walking in the countryside is determined by conventions of performance, which "serve as a medium for bestowing meaning on the self and the social" (Ibid, 1366f).

Even though walking in the countryside is determined by shared conventions, it is often a habitual and unreflected practice, which unintentionally conveys and

reproduces conventions concerning the 'appropriateness' of bodily demeanor (Cf. Edensor 2001, 82).
As a kind of practical knowledge, walking articulates a relationship between the walker and the place. The relationship is the outcome of the materiality and shape of the landscape, its symbolic meaning, and the sensual perception and experience while walking through space: the smell, the characteristics of the soil, etc. The countryside is partly produced by the routes which walkers follow. The hiking trail leads the way. There is a bench to take a rest. Walking produces and reproduces space and place, inscribing paths and signs in rural space.
While walking we are transmitting meaning while sustaining wider ideologies about nature. Walking becomes bound up with a retreat from the city, a holiday from the urban self. The urban in this view is seen as constricting. It can be assumed that the urban-rural dichotomy is sustained by ideas about the value of walking in the country, which asserts beauty, freedom, and the social and natural order of the rural in contrast to the urban. The walkers reinscribe and reproduce these urban-rural dichotomies through their spatial practices. Beyond the walking practices of urbanites, rurality and its embodiment can also be found in the institutionalized setting of the heritage committee (*Heimatverein*) of one of the villages.

Embodying the Idyll

The heritage committee was founded in the nineteen-fifties, which is in itself interesting as the early nineteen-fifties were a time when structural changes in rural areas became particularly palpable. The founders declared their objectives to be the following: "To preserve the tradition—especially in the solstice celebrations—the promotion and preservation of our low German mother tongue, and the home preservation (*Heimatpflege*) are some of the association's goals" (Homepage of the Heritage Committee).
During performances like the solstice celebrations, the members of the heritage committee wear so-called traditional dresses. The men wear knickerbockers and vests, or blue shirts with red scarfs around their neck, a so-called traditional dress of the fishermen of Hamburg. At "the evening of spinning to watch or participate," the women show how to spin wool and knit clothes, and the men explain the craft of making ropes. They are reenacting old crafts and folklore dances. The members of the committee are taking part in inventing tradition (Hobsbawm 2007).
During their performances, the rural is presented as the preserver of a native culture, in which life was homogenous and idyllic, characterized by tradition, family, health, peace, nature, and community (*Gemeinschaft*). During their shows, the members bring specific performative norms of a traditionally and regionally constructed rurality and a closely related gender construction on stage. These constructions of rural masculinity and femininity incorporate highly traditional assumptions about the body. It can be assumed that local associations are agents in the social construction of space. The bodies are involved in producing and mediating positive aspects of the rural; they are embodying a rural idyll.
With regard to gender I could also observe something that is, on the one hand, challenging research on rural

masculinity and, on the other hand, is a source of within the village community. Currently, agriculture no longer has the central importance in rural areas that it had until the end of World War II. The number of small farms has decreased in the last six decades in favor of large agricultural farms and the daily working routines of farmers have severely changed.

Rurban Masculinities?

On a dairy farm I encountered the "computer-cowherd-management." The farmer spends some of his working-time in an office, the so-called "cowshed-office" where he monitors his herd with the *T4C (Time for Cows)* management software. Animal care and feeding are automated. The time-consuming and physically demanding sprinkling of boxes with straw bedding is taken over by machines that run on rails under the ceiling above the boxes.

The calving pen is supervised by cameras, and the farmer follows the action from his kitchen or living room. To save costs, he outsourced the external sector, the driving of grass silage and maize silage harvesting, to contractors. It is clear that the farmer engages in technical, but also entrepreneurial practices. Hard work and being seen as a good working man has traditionally been a source of masculine status in farming and can still be found in some contexts. Here, however, the farmer presents himself as a businessman and a technician and is proud of the clean work.

The mechanization and commodification of agriculture relieves the farmer largely of heavy physical labor. At the same time, it demands new technical and managerial skills. Rural cultures have often been built around physically defined masculinities and tended towards the valorization of the work-hardened body. Yet, I rarely encountered traditional agricultural practices that are associated with physically demanding work. Though in some situations, the farmer has to act as an expert of nature, a powerful man, and his appearance must correspond to this. For example, when tourists or school classes are visiting the farm.

I encountered new agricultural technician- and entrepreneur-based masculinities on many farms. Interestingly, the farmers, especially if they are pursuing conventionally non-organic farming, feel increasingly separated in the village community and also see the political class as a "threat to their farms." This leads me to the question in what way rural policy takes part in reinventing rurality. My last example is *LEADER*.

The (Re)invention of Rurality

LEADER means *Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale*, meaning "Links between the rural economy and development actions." The *LEADER* Initiative was established by the European Commission in 1991. It was designed to aid the development of sustainable rural communities following the reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy. *LEADER* promotes a "bottom-up" approach to rural development with the implementation of business plans and decisions on funding being made at a national level on projects supporting rural areas.

Local Action Groups (LAGs) are composed of public and private partners from the rural territory, and must include representatives from different socio-economic sectors. They receive financial assistance to implement local development strategies by awarding grants to local projects.

The focus of the Local Action Group of the region both villages I observed are situated in is on the preservation and development of parkland, on nature, and on the climate. The group states that "the preservation of the landscape is essential for the quality of life and attractiveness of the region. Other important elements of the parkland should be preserved and developed, such as tree-lined avenues, hedgerows, ponds, lakes, and moors."

Another aspect of the group's actions is "Tourism." They declare that untapped potential has to be revealed. The parkland, or the so-called typical regional landscape, is supposed to be brought to life. Among other things, hiking trails, nature trails, and special routes should be developed. The garden culture of the region, health facilities, and accessibility are further expanded. Actors and deals, among other things, are more interconnected through the use of advanced digital solutions.

The third field of action is called "Demography." It aims to counteract the shortage of skilled workers, which is the primary concern in the area. Among other efforts, decentralized and mobile products are seen as a possibility to improve and strengthen health services and the cohesion of the people.

The fourth section on "Regional Development" aims to reduce land consumption.

The research and preservation of the typical regional culture, and in particular the building and housing culture, is promoted in order to include elements of the traditional architectural culture.

What do the objectives of the Local Action Group involve? What is the discourse about rurality enfolded in this program? It is all about the natural and cultural dimensions of rurality. These policies are aimed at a reinvention of the rural where there is less space for production and more space for consumption. The European Policies for rural areas encourage the progressive disintegration of the countryside's dependence on agriculture. They reinforce the cultural and natural resources' potential, considered as new possibilities for business and for a symbolic and functional reinvention.

The resources are presented as idyllic in relation to a particular, imagined past, i.e., a traditional and familiar environment or picture that exists only in our imagination (Bunce 1994; Hobsbawm 2007). The countryside as this construction and its potential are used as raw material for a reinvention of rurality. The so-called "Countryside Ideal," as the set of romantic representations around the 'natural' landscapes and around a rural lifestyle as well as social environment, adds a lot of fuel to the reinvention discourse.

The discourse is strongly connected to the belief that there is an alternative to that urbanity, which is criticized so intensely. This set of idyllic representations around rurality is deeply established in our cultures and is reinforced in a time of urban crisis. This culturally established set of representations, myths, and symbolic landscapes, fancies the countryside and its characteris-

tics, promoting some cultural values such as tradition, family, health, peace, nature, social cohesion, etc. These values are supposedly endangered in the modern civilization, and the countryside has the mission to preserve them (Bunce 1994; Hobsbawm 2007). The countryside has the function to preserve what the city "destroys." In this context, culture is understood as traditional heritage and local memory, whilst nature is associated with a pastoral landscape. The sacralization of the cultural and natural heritage falls to the rural; the responsibility of guaranteeing the maintenance of what is being lost in the globalized and industrialized world—local identities, belonging, social homogeneity, traditional family and lifestyles, local ways of production, regional food, nature, etc.

The spread of ecological thinking (esp. in the new sustainability discourse), and the appreciation of natural and cultural heritage seem to act as important catalysts for the fortification of the reinvention discourse. The countryside earns a symbolic and economic value. It is no longer centered on its productive functions, but becomes a new consumption circuit. Conceiving a reinforced value in territories that were presumably useless in the transforming economy provides a strategic centrality to rurality in our representations and political agendas. The function of the countryside is seen as a recreational site for urbanites to make contact with nature and works as a selection mechanism for some aspects of material culture, nature, and architecture that seem worth preserving.

The rural stands as an imaginative space and as an object of lifestyle desire for some people—a place to move to, make holidays, find different forms of nature, and generally practice alternatives to the city. Interestingly, pro-rural migration is underpinned by these positively valued cultural and social constructions of rurality.

We find a clean version of rurality in the reinvention discourse, where the commodities of the city are guaranteed and the discomforts of rural life, like animal dirt, noise, smells, and the agriculture industry and so on are avoided. This is likely to promote the exclusion of people that do not fit in this picture of the rural community, for example, migrant laborers, non-normative gender identities, or conventional farmers. The exclusion of the rural community is something that the farmers complained about and has already been the topic of research in Rural Studies (Fliege 1998).

In conclusion, it can be assumed that material, imagined, and practiced ruralities are intertwined and research shows that images or representations of the rural have an impact on rural lifestyles, housing preferences, and other consumer activities (Cf. Eriksson 2010). Edward Said speaks about "imaginative geographies" (Said 1978/1995), by which he describes the symbolic forms of representation of a modeled space, which is in accordance with specific wishes or ideas—a space that governs the collective and individual perception. Such imagined geographies dominate both foreign images as well as the individual and cultural self-image (Bachmann-Medick 2006, 296). The social image of the village—as well as the variety of real villages—represents both a space of experience as well as a reservoir of images and senses where the question of how to live a 'good life' can be discussed (Nell and Weiland 2014). Following the example of the

village allows us to discuss the question in terms of what a society is, can, or should not be.

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Notes

1 Since a revelation of the respective villages would endanger the research process, they will remain anonymized in this article.

2 Discourse is understood as "naturally occurring talk and text" (Edwards and Potter 1992, 28). Referring to Charles Goodwin's "Action and Embodiment within situated human interaction" this also includes communication by the body through gestures, facial expressions, posture, positioning, and movement in space (Goodwin 2000). Symbolic orders are not necessarily available in text form, but produced by social actors through their bodily actions and a "practical knowledge" (Bourdieu 1984, 735f).

The Rural as an Autonomous Narrative within the Hierarchy of Global Urbanization or What Kind of Stories Can the Rural Tell within the City?

Christiane Sörensen, Wiltrud Simbürger

In light of the fact that since the beginning of the twenty-first century more than half of the world's population lives in metropolitan areas—and this trend is rising—our current discourse in architecture and landscape architecture revolves mainly around the emergence and the production of urban space worldwide (OECD 2012). Urbanization has become one of the defining narratives of our times. We look at and speak about space foremost in urban terms. By doing this, we neglect the role and contribution of the rural to the discourse.

So the question of what role the rural—in all its articulations—is to play within this global trend has become urgent. What will the future of the rural be: a by-product of an ever-growing metropolis, marginalized, depopulated, and subsidized instead of invested in? (Krasny 2012). A concept that lives on in the imagination only as an unadulterated idyll? Or can it uphold its spatial and ideational autonomy? Is there a power of the rural—ecologically, experientially, and ideationally—that can, or even needs to be taken into account when developing new planning strategies for twenty-first-century urban change? (Bell 2010).

There is a less bleak take on the described development, though. Despite the "tsunami of urbanization" (De Meulder 2014) and the looming withdrawal of the rural, a closer inspection shows a much more nuanced picture. Countering urban growth, new and old articulations of the rural are being found inside the urban environment—be it as leftover spaces or as newly created spaces displaying rural properties. In the case of China, for example, Bruno de Meulder and Kelly Shannon identify rural remnants being enclosed by an ever-expanding urban landscape and observe that something rural

always remains, even "after the urban imposes its might" (De Meulder 2014). In Western countries, local citizens and municipal authorities responsible for environment and nature preservation fight for the preservation of rural spaces in the city. Plans by housing authorities for new building in leftover spaces, for example, are often met with fierce resistance.[1] In another development, new urban spaces are being re-inscribed with rural connotations (Krasny 2012). Ecologically conscious activities like urban farming and gardening have become a familiar cause for grass-roots initiatives (Rettich 2013; Filkobski 2012; and Reynolds 2009).

In order to critically investigate this development, we have initiated a research network with partners from Denmark, India, and Israel which explores the rural specifically in the context of the urban. Within our network we ask questions like:

- What kind of role is the rural left to play—in all its spatial and symbolic facets—within the trend of global urbanization?
- Will the rural become a mere by-product of the city, marginalized and devalued by an overwhelming urban narrative or can it uphold its autonomy?
- What kind of contribution can the rural make to the city?

By identifying, documenting, and analyzing manifestations of the rural in today's urban areas worldwide, we aim to reassert the spatial imagination of the rural and advocate for its incorporation into the contemporary urbanization discourse.

The Twoness of the Rural

The notion of the rural—rurality—has long played a well-established role in the popular imagination as the antithesis to the city—as everything the urban is not. Or to put it more provocatively, as the residual being left over by the urban. This lopsided dichotomy has been challenged many times since (Williams 1973). Specifically, since the advent of industrialization in the nineteenth century, and the subsequent increase of rural migration into urban areas and the fraying of such spaces, it has become obvious that a dualistic concept does not have the capacity any longer to map the rapidly changing relationships. From the twentieth century onwards, new concepts like Pahl's rural-urban continuum seemed to better describe the newly emerging hybrid spaces, and many more terms like suburban, peri-urban, urban fringe, borderlands, Thomas Sievert's *Zwischenstadt* (in-between city), or rurban have arisen since to address the spatial blurring of a traditionally binary relationship (Pahl 1960; Sieverts 2001; Schaeffer 2014; and Scott 2007).

Nevertheless, the rural-urban dualism still serves as a powerful concept in the popular world of ideas as well as in academia where the disciplines continue to divide along these lines.[2] The definition of rurality varies depending on the discipline, with "at the end of the day it's just low population density" being the most basic one[3] (Bell 2007). For our own research purposes, we decided to follow Michael Bell's concept of the first and the second rural. With the first rural addressing the spatial, material, and ecological dimension of the term and the second one its symbolic and ideational dimension, our

research goal is to investigate both aspects equally in terms of what role they play with regard to questions of sustainable urban growth.

The first rural is about actual space, natural and agricultural spaces, and their ecological and environmental aspects. It denotes low population density and primary production and seeks an "objective, anyone-can-count-it-and-count-on-it determination of the rural, rooted in the material presence, or lack, of persons on the material foundation of the land. It is "something we can map, … and which is always understood with respect to, and immediately implies, the urban" as its complement (Bell 2007). However, the notion of the rural tells yet another story. The rural idea in its symbolic or ideational articulation is about creating a place rather than space. This second rural concerns itself with ideas and narratives of the rural, from the nostalgic idyll to social utopias and collectivism to backwardness, conservatism, and poverty, and how these ideas are connected to a specific place in time. Such a place can even be a virtual one, created for example by a commercial that is set in an idyllic rural landscape in order to evoke feelings of peace and happiness (Frühsorge 1999).

A Perennial Autonomous Narrative

We would like to start with a look back in history. The Duke of Berry's Book of Hours from the fifteenth century with the images by the painter Paul Limburg and his brothers is well known. The concept of the monthly images originates from pre-modern European culture and reflects a narrative concept which due to the constancy of motives has evolved into an independent iconographic type. The twelve months of the year are represented visually and constitute an agricultural calendar in the broadest sense. Typical and existentially significant cycles of agriculture, forestry, or domestic labor are shown as well as joyful activities. So, both the monthly labors and the monthly pleasures.

The images evoke a notion of universality in terms of time and place that is connected to rural life. With the representation of the zodiac signs, unstructured time is brought into a complementary order with the basic activities in the countryside—an order which represents a narrative of rural life. *Très Riches Heures*, the Duke of Berry's manuscript captivates by its perspectival architecture and its realistic representation of landscape. For example, the image representing the month of July—a harvest month—shows the themes of grain harvest and sheep shearing (▶1). We can clearly distinguish between farmland and pasture, separated by a stream which drives a mill. The buildings seem like a backdrop in a clear demarcation to the rural area. They represent by no means a village, but rather signify a wall beyond which another form of life exists.

The monthly images were intended to teach all classes and ranks—also those beyond the wall—about the seasonal cycle of agricultural activities. They focus on the temporal sequence of events. Despite the realistic rendering of the methods of agricultural cultivation, they embody a universal, supra-local concept. Social problems were excluded in these images. They were supposed to show a quiet, well-ordered idyll—and thus, they contributed to the establishment of the romantic idea

1
"July," or "The Palace of Poitiers," attributed to Paul Limbourg (between 1410 and 1416)

of European pastoral life. Ruralism became an aesthetic category, exceeding by far the goal of representing the productive work with the land. The act of man leaving his dwelling—the city—and stepping "outside" turned agricultural space into an aesthetic category, a spiritual place to which the cultural history of Europe is tied until the present day.
Nearly four hundred years later, in 1862, German writer Theodor Fontane makes similar observations on his walks through the Mark Brandenburg:

**„In der Front jedes Hauses stand ein uralter Birnbaum .... In dem hohlen Hauptast bauten die Bienen, an dem Stamm lehnte die Sense, zwischen den Zweigen hing das Netz; und in dieser Dreiheit lag ersichtlich das Dasein dieser einfachen Menschen beschlossen. Das Sammeln des Honigs, das Mähen der Wiese, das Fischen im Fluß, in so engem Kreislauf vollendete sich tagtäglich ihre Welt. Und so war es immer an dieser Stelle ....
Und in diesem Berührtwerden von etwas Unwandelbarem, in der Wahrnehmung von dem ewigen Eingereihtsein des Menschen in den Haushalt der Natur, liegt der Zauber dieser Einsamkeitsdörfer."**

(Fontane 1862/2014)[4]

His portrayal of the countryside focuses mainly on a social topos, on places where the concreteness of existence can be perceived through the most basic experiences. He describes an area that has been cultivated by farmers laboriously and under precarious circumstances. Fontane foregrounds the uneventful, the embeddedness into the natural cycle, and awareness for the everyday life. In thirty years of "research through walking," he charts a very specific territory and captures its characteristics. In a letter to Ernst von Pfuel he writes in 1864:

„Es ist alles auf ein Ganzes hin angelegt, auf die Beweisführung, auch im märkischen Sande fließen die Quellen des Lebens, und jeder Fußbreit Erde hat seine Geschichte und erzählt sie auch."

(Fontane 1864/1979)

In Fontane's writing, the countryside of the Mark Brandenburg becomes culturally charged. It becomes a narrative topography. At the same time, he produces a large archive of useful images about rural life during this era. Connected to the specific spaces he describes is the encounter with its working inhabitants in all their entirety.
Fontane does not glorify space, but he poeticizes its specificity in such a way that once you hear the name of a specific place in Brandenburg, you associate a particular image with it—an image which did not exist before or did in a trivial way only. Rurality as a narrative of the pre-modern period is the result of a long and lasting history of the actual and ideational work of man with the land.

Landscape Program Hamburg

The natural landscape on which urban expansion is playing out right now existed long before this development began. Remnants of forests, waters, and the consequences of rural practices form a substratum for current urbanization processes, a sub-layer which sometimes is being destroyed, sometimes still shines through, and sometimes survives as a remnant in the specific landscape itself, as well as in the minds and rituals of the humans who occupy it.
To illustrate the point of rural specificity, we would like to draw attention to the area of the Vier- und Marschlande around Hamburg. The marshes have long been a part of the city's agricultural supply zone. The area is characteristic of the continuous technical innovations in terms of dealing with the relationship between water and land. Through continuous settlement and cultivation of these fertile wetlands a strange landscape with a specific geometrical pattern of allotments has emerged. A study performed by Christiane Sörensen with students examined the extent to which this spatial texture still exists and has brought to light how the space is slowly transformed by new urban settlements whose planning patterns are distant from the old rural regularity. The old rural pattern is still legible today to a certain extent and great efforts are being made to preserve it.
During the nineteen-eighties, under the leadership of Christiane Sörensen, the Office of the Urban Development and Environment developed a landscape program for the city of Hamburg. This had become necessary as a consequence of a new environmental law which, in itself was a consequence of the increasing power of the ecological movement. Up to that point, the land development plan of 1972 was in effect and the maps used the color green for all open green spaces alike, and thus already defined them as future parks and recreational areas. The interstitial spaces between the settlement axes were declared landscape axes and used as a regulatory model for the new land development plan. Also, great importance was attached to the still large amount of agricultural spaces on Hamburg's city property. The unspecific green areas were transformed in part into yellow areas signifying regional farming between settlements as points of reference for city dwellers (▶2).
In an ongoing study that we conduct with students within a course at the HafenCity University Hamburg we look at these yellow spaces in their current condition.

2
Vier- und Marschlande

Figure 3 shows Moorfleet, the spearhead of the Vier- und Marschlande in the direction of the city (▶3). The area is almost completely reshaped by urban infrastructure. Its rural character is in dissolution. But fragments of rurality remain.

Borderlands—the Potential of Rural Fragments

Until today, rural life connotes the longing for the outside, the symbol for authentic life in nature. The step outside—also as an act of liberation from one's own social and cultural background describes the topos of a borderland, both at the fringes of the city as well as at the fringes of nature.

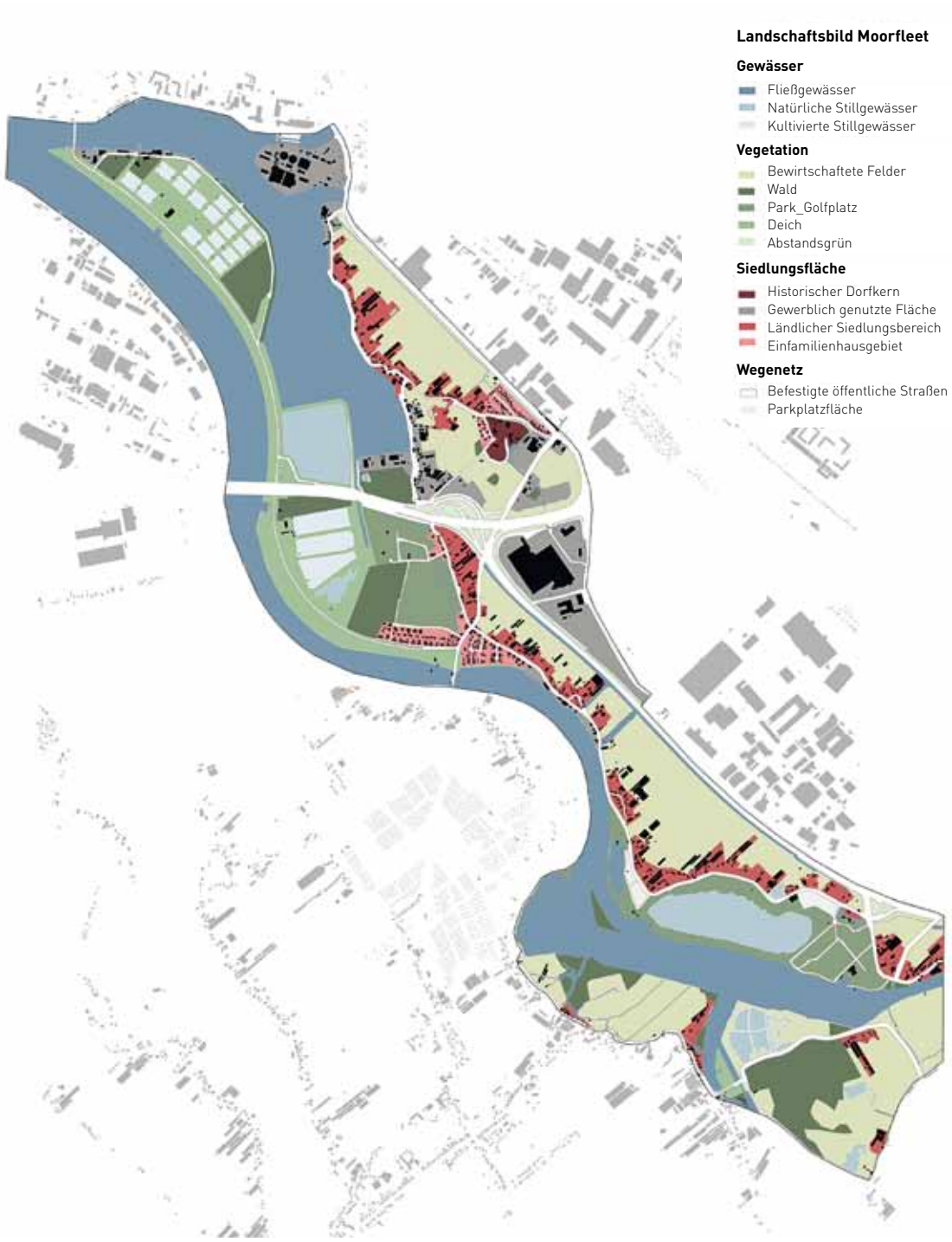
In 1974/76, many years after Theodor Fontane brought the Mark Brandenburg to life spatially, another chronicler of space, the German director Wim Wenders, documented the current spatial cultural condition. In his road movie *Alice in the Cities*, Wenders showed the omnipresent city whose images look more and more similar, but he also discovered the borderlands of the city and their specific value. He established their ugliness as an aesthetic category. Twenty years later, this aesthetic reality was finally registered by regional and urban planners and reflected in Thomas Sieverts's book *Zwischenstadt*, which also attached importance to the cultural landscape between the urban fringes (Sieverts 2000).

When regional landscapes conflate with urban topographies, like in the case of Moorfleet, open spaces emerge or remain as fragments between and along the fringes of urbanization. In our research on these borderlands and their rural aspects we address the following topics:

1. The presence of the "natural"
   Borderlands allow gradual processes and make them visible. They represent the "other" of the city. They offer vastness, openness, and freedom from urban habits. They are spaces of longing and enable a different experience of time, both in the sense of memory and in an immediate presence (for example the changes in the time of the day and seasons).
2. The culture of spatial memory
   What kind of stories do these spaces tell us about their reality between the borders? What is written between the lines? What kind of historical sediments are inscribed? Which narrative traces can be uncovered? And which familiar habits, traditions, and rural practices do these spaces bring to life?
3. Stories told by the city—spatial representations
   Which attributes do the current urban environment add to these spaces? The diversity of its visitors, rituals of certain social groups living next to each other ... the influence of the city creates another image, a fleeting, temporal one vis-a-vis the inscribed traditions.

Looking at the interstitial spaces at the Moorfleet site, we can identify a patchwork of diverse urban and rural forms of existence. The new landscape is defined less by territoriality, specificity, and individuality, but more by a preference for mobility and temporal usage of public and semi-public spaces.

3
Site analysis Moorfleet, developed by Sandra Koth, Clara Thomas, and Linda Ziehlke



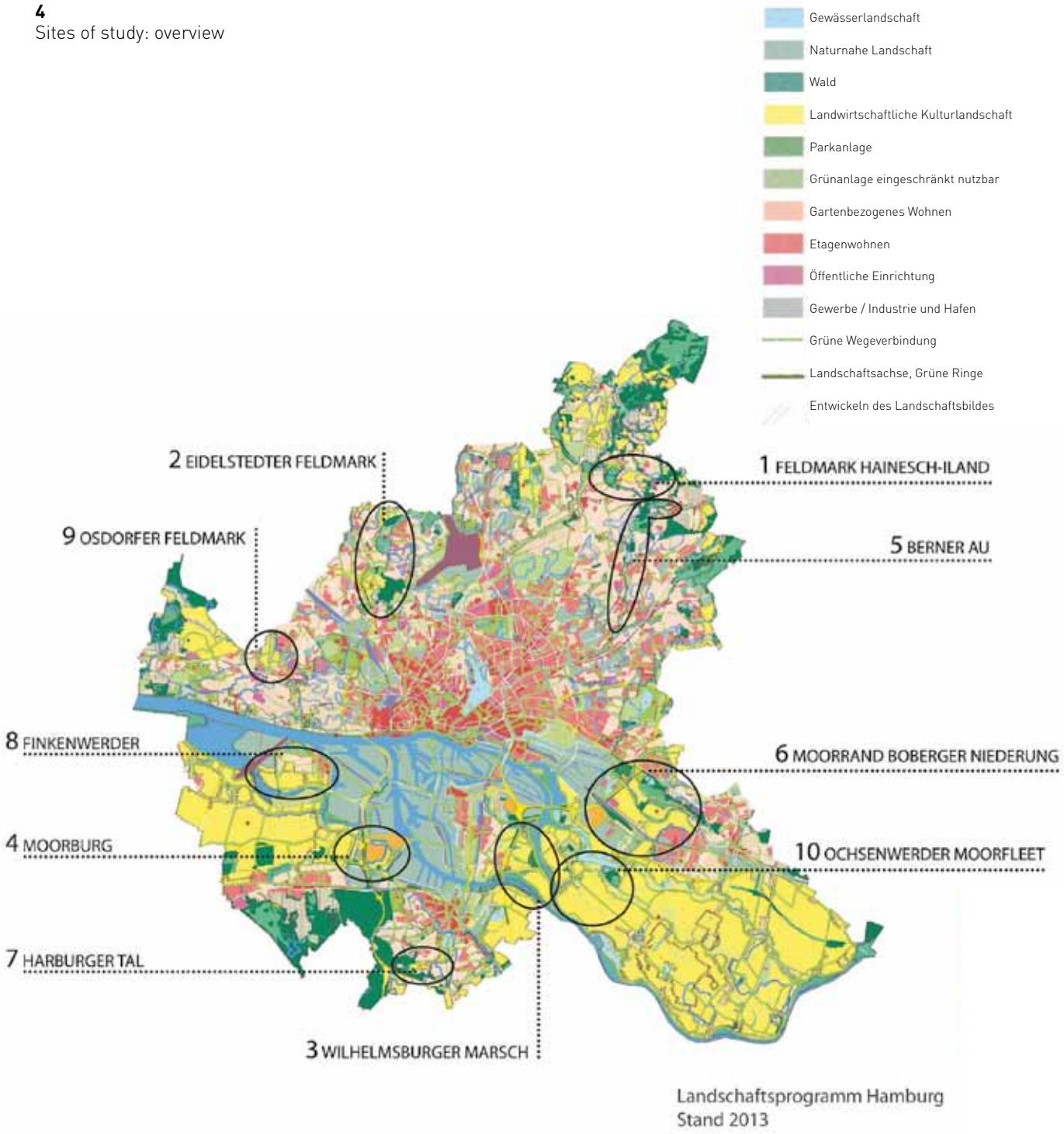
Geographic and Cultural Specificity

In order to address the geographical and cultural differences of the phenomenon of the "rural in the city," we conducted the course together with a group of Israeli students from the Technion (Israel Institute of Technology) in Haifa, Israel. Together with Iris Aravot from the faculty of architecture and town planning we worked in a parallel manner, each of them about twenty-five students, on rural sites in Hamburg and Haifa.
The students followed the footsteps of Fontane and Wenders, and documented, mapped, and analyzed the sites and the experiences they offer. In July 2016 we will meet in Hamburg to show each other our results and to discuss similarities and differences.
Figure 4 shows the German sites in and around Hamburg (▶4). The Israeli site in Haifa is called Wadi Rushmia, a former stone quarry whose natural features have been transformed over thirty years by infrastructural mega- projects and the building of the "biggest shopping mall of the Middle East," the Grand Canyon shopping mall. For decades, Wadi Rushmia has been informally occupied by groups with different cultural backgrounds.

Outlook: The Rural in the City—A Multicultural Commons?

In order to make the German students familiar with the site of their Israeli counterparts they watched Amos Gitai's Wadi Rushmia trilogy where he depicts the cultural diversity of this rural borderland in the city. During the period from 1981 to 2001, Gitai followed and interviewed different people who have settled down in the wadi: Yussuf and Isha, an Arabic couple whose families were expelled from their houses after the foundation of the state of Israel; Iso and Salo, brothers and Holocaust survivors who immigrated to Israel from Eastern Europe and Miriam and Skander, a Jewish woman from Hungary who is married to an Arabic fisherman. They all cultivate the wadi and support their livelihood through it. Gitai shows an image of fragile coexistence between culturally diverse groups: a multicultural commons.
In their research on rural spaces around Hamburg, the German students looked at the political debates surrounding them. Some of the sites are currently being considered as residences for refugees. This topic brought back Gitai's question of a possible coexistence offered by rural leftover spaces. What is the potential of rural borderlands to accommodate cultural diversity today? What is their potential to act as a multicultural commons—as fragile as it may be?

4
Sites of study: overview



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Notes

1 See the ongoing discussion in Hamburg about the protection of the "Hamburger Feldmarken" vs. new municipal housing projects or the expansion of the harbor area or the conflict in Berlin about how to use the Tempelhof area (https://tempelhofer-feld.berlin.de/).

2 Compare academic programs like urban planning, urban design, urban studies, rural studies, rural sociology, etc.

3 For more definitions see for example Bosworth (2013), Cloke (2006), Halfacree (1993), or Henkel (2004).

4 Roughly translated by the authors:

"In front of each house, there stood an age-old pear tree …

bees built in the hollow main branch, a scythe rested against the trunk, a net dangled between the twigs; and evidently, it was in this trinity that the existence of these plain people was contained. Collecting honey, mowing the meadow, fishing in the river, in such tight circle their world completed itself day in and day out. And so it had always been in that place ….

And in this being-touched by something immutable, in the awareness of the eternal embeddedness of humans in nature's housekeeping, lies the magic of these villages of solitude."

(R)urban Landscapes. Navigating between the Urban and the Rural Perspective

Sigrun Langner

We live in an urbanized world. We observe what happens around us from an urban perspective—a perspective that also has blind spots, however. All too often, this manifests itself in oversimplified dualisms and dichotomies: on the one hand, the city—modern, progressive, and advancing—and on the other the country—pre-modern, backward, and declining.

The same applies to the hybrid spaces and situations in which city and country have fused to form new, independent spatial configurations. These too are viewed from an urban perspective: suburbanization, *Zwischenstadt*, urban sprawl, urban fabric are just some of the terms used to describe the socio-spatial transformation of what was previously rural land undergoing urbanization processes. This predominantly one-sided urban viewpoint needs enriching—overlaying—with perspectives from a rural viewpoint. Only then will we be able to understand the landscape around us as a (re)combination of urban and rural elements and contexts, and be able to find unrevealed but productive and compelling relations and connections between the urban and the rural.

The Urban Perspective

It is a well-known fact that the process of urbanization is advancing all over the world, and that by the year 2050, the ratio of urban to rural populations is expected to be approximately two-thirds to one-third (UN 2014). The issues facing society today and in the future—adaptation to climate change, coping with the demographic shift, counteracting social inequality, providing equal access to opportunities, and promoting cultural and economic

innovation—are therefore being tackled predominantly in urban terms. As such, it is no surprise that the focus of current social and spatial discourse on the future of society is on cities and metropolitan regions.[1]

Back in the nineteen-seventies, Henri Lefebvre used the term "urban tissue" ("*tissue urbain*") to describe the structure of the semi-dense urban configurations spreading across the land as a result of global urbanization processes (Lefebvre 1970/2003). The successive expansion of the urban realm is the product of diverse, interconnected social processes. The economic, technical, and political restrictions that once confined a city's population to remain within the city walls have fallen away (Siebel 2009, 89). Technological advances, for example in transportation and information technology, as well as the diverse, now omnipresent, forms of media have eroded the traditional boundaries between the urban and the rural. An urban way of life is now possible more or less everywhere, at least in industrial nations and regions.

In current spatial discourse, our concept of the city has shifted from that of a contained entity, a physical unit of settlement, to that of a flowing space. This "space of flows," as Castells (2001) calls it, encompasses financial and capital flows, the flow of information, of knowledge, and of images that are no longer anchored to a particular place and contribute to the expansion of the urban fabric. The city—seen as "an all-encompassing three-dimensional network of diverse social and physical links"—has become boundless (Baccini and Oswald 1998, 19). Global urbanization processes apply not only to the growing urban agglomerations: if this process of urbanization is as all-encompassing as suggested, then all that remains are different forms of the urban. The ETH Basel Studio's study "Switzerland: An Urban Portrait," for example, portrays Switzerland as an urban continuum with different degrees of urbanity (Diener et al. 2006). Or as Walter Siebel (2003) has described it from an urban sociology perspective: "the social counterpart to the city, the country, is disappearing."

The Rural Perspective

So, has the trend towards urbanization rendered the rural perspective irrelevant? Does society now see the rural as a residual category at best, and in planning terms either as the problematic periphery, whose population is declining as its economy shrinks, or else as a conservation area to be maintained, or even as an area of compensation for regions that are flourishing?

In our urbanized world we are constantly faced with ever more diverse and contradictory aspects of the rural: in how it is represented in the media, in the romanticized worlds portrayed in magazines, in spatial and political discourse on upholding equal living conditions, in the local municipalities' attempts to retain or attract doctors to the country, in agro-political discussions on "greening measures" versus improving efficiency, in the competition between foodstuffs and energy crops and between nature conservation and recreation, in the longing for traditional images of the cultural landscape, and ultimately also in the innumerable individual decisions to establish a particular way of life in the country—to name but a few.

In various different social communication processes, each with their own agenda, we see the rural portrayed in opposition to the city, as its "other." While the spatial disciplines and social sciences point to the dissolution of the old dualism of city and countryside, communications in the everyday world are constantly (re)producing various qualities of the rural environment. The imagery they portray have diverse and varied associations and meanings. When people talk of the rural, they often mean the landscape, and associate it with images of traditional countryside and pre-industrial agriculture. These images are in many cases ways of preserving traditional connotations of the kind that are rapidly disappearing in the context of modern means of production in industrialized agriculture. Nevertheless, they are potent images that remain firmly anchored in our minds.

In our consideration of the rural, we see a recurring discrepancy between, on the one hand, romanticized glorifications of the landscape, and on the other hand, dramatic predictions of the demise of villages and dystopian images of the countryside. Taking this discrepancy and the current renewed interest in the rural as its starting point, an interdisciplinary research project funded by the VW Foundation is looking at "the return of the village as a space of imagination, projection and action."[2]

The focus of this project is the village as a narrative construct, as seen from the viewpoints of literature, social science, and landscape planning. The basic hypothesis is that, in a wide range of contexts, the "rural" is both a foil as well as a field of communication for self-description and self-identity in modern society. Representations of the rural ultimately speak of the individual and collective needs, aspirations, and also fears of today's urbanized society. We therefore need to ask ourselves:

- Which functions do narratives of village life have from different perspectives and in different situations?
- How can we understand the current revival of interest in the rural as a space of imagination?
- And how can we harness this wave of imagination for social and spatial design questions?

(R)urban Landscapes as Spaces of Projection and Action

As part of this interdisciplinary collaborative project, the Bauhaus-University Weimar will examine this subject from a landscape planning perspective in the sub-project "(R)urban landscapes as spaces of projection and action." The project investigates the intersection between urban and rural lifestyles and imagined conceptual constructs along with the (r)urban spatial structures that these give rise to.

"(R)urban Landscapes" describe the intertwining of urban and rural realities, environments, and spatial structures. They are produced by everyday practice, but also by imaginary spatial patterns. How urban is the country? How rural is the city? In what situations do the city and the country enter into novel and productive collaborations?

(R)urban Spaces of Action

The patterns in the way we act in everyday practice reveal hybrid forms of the urban and rural: for example, urban lifestyles in the countryside (Dirksmeier 2009) or recurring rural structures in the city (Nell 2014).
On the one hand, urban space has become boundless and all of society urbanized. Urban life is no longer necessarily reliant on a specific spatial typology such as the compact European city, but is also a reality in sparsely settled regions. And on the other hand, rural practices have infiltrated urban contexts. Small building groups and neighborhood gardens are sustaining small and interconnected structural units and are transferring the close-knit social patterns of the village into the city. Urban gardening and urban agriculture projects are raising questions about self-sustenance and local economic value chains. Can this "return to the garden in the city" be seen as a corrective instance of urban society that has become more aware of the value of community-oriented living and working constellations? At the same time, we are also seeing structures in which traditional cultural landscapes are appearing in cities with the aim of improving biodiversity, preserving nature, and managing existing nature in the cities. Traditional farming methods such as grazing and mowing are being utilized to maintain urban green areas, for example in Leipzig Paunsdorf.[3] On Berlin's Tempelhof Airfield, a citizens' referendum and active local initiative secured the future of the airfield as a broad expanse of open meadowland. In the heart of the metropolitan city, urbanites have elected to protect their nostalgic image of open, expansive landscape, replete with skylarks providing aural authenticity.

As soon as the urban becomes part of the rural, the rural is already part of the urban.

(R)urban Spaces of Projection

It is not only within how we act on an everyday basis that urban and rural practices and behavioral patterns become intertwined: numerous utopian visions of urban living and landscape planning exhibit similar fusions of the town and country. In these landscape architecture and urban design proposals, just as in the literary imaginations of the village, the authors wrestle with ideas of what society has been, how it could be, and how it should (or should not) be. Several ideal visions for a successful combination of the city and country arose in response to the problems of industrialization and expanding cities:
Ebenezer Howard's *Garden City of Tomorrow* (1898) aimed to combine the respective benefits of the town and country with one another and formulated his ideal model for healthy human communities. Leberecht Migge's *Green Manifesto* (1919) called for the right for people to grow their own produce, also in the cities. His vision was that the rural practice of cultivation for own consumption would free urban workers from the domination of the capitalist system.

"Who will save the city? Country will save the city. The only way to save the city of old is to bring the country back to the city: Create city-country!" (Migge 1919)

Or Frank Lloyd Wright's *Broadacre City* (1932/35), in which he describes a social utopia for a decentralized settled agricultural landscape. His concept can also be read as a social criticism of the inequalities of the industrial city (Waldheim 2010, 124). Projections of hybrid urban-rural structures also arose in connection with the discourse on post-industrial and shrinking cities. Here too, images of the rural city are employed: a stretch of wasteland in Leipzig-Plagwitz on which a factory for agricultural machinery once stood was symbolically plowed and then planted with rye as part of an art project in 1999. The so-called "Millennium Field" served as a potent and provocative image of the shrinking city.[4] Against that background, and in the context of shrinking cities, Holger Lauinger proposes the "principle of rurbanity" and the need to more fully exploit the potential of urban agriculture (Lauinger 2005, 164).

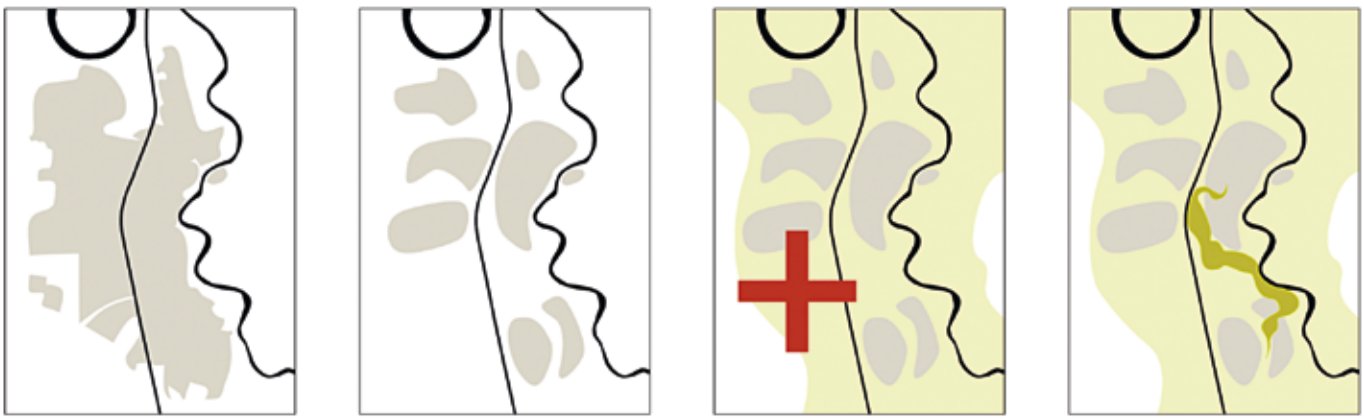
"The search for potential in the intersection of urbanity and rural elements has only just begun. Instead of aesthetically uninspiring grassland or the helpless abandonment of municipal land, we must apply the principle of 'rurbanity.'"
(Lauinger 2005, 164)

What will it mean for the dense European city when entire swathes of urban fabric are replaced by countryside and agricultural land? Will it lose its urban character as it becomes less dense, or will it acquire a new urban quality through the introduction of new open spaces to the city?

Projections of (R)urban Landscapes in Shrinking Regions: The "Landschaftszug Dessau"

The "Landschaftszug Dessau" project aimed to explore the potential that land cultivation can offer in the restructuring of shrinking cities.[5] What new kinds of landscapes can arise when the built fabric of the city begins to disintegrate?
Dessau-Rosslau is a shrinking town and since 1990 has lost approximately a fifth of its inhabitants. The town was quick to respond to the new demographic situation, formulating a new urban development concept of "urban cores and landscape zones" as a way of steering the shrinking process. The first parts of this strategy were implemented as part of the International Building Exhibition (IBA) Stadtumbau 2010 (▶1).
To avoid the gradual perforation of the urban fabric as a result of the uncoordinated demolition of residential, industrial, and commercial buildings, the town attempted to concentrate demolition in defined "landscape zones" while simultaneously strengthening the substance and infrastructure of the "urban cores." The extensive "landscape zones" link up with the "Gartenreich Dessau-Wörlitz" (literally "Garden Realm") in the immediate vicinity. The guiding idea of 'bringing the garden realm back into the city' establishes both a connection with the landscape of open, cultivated grassland and with the principle of linking

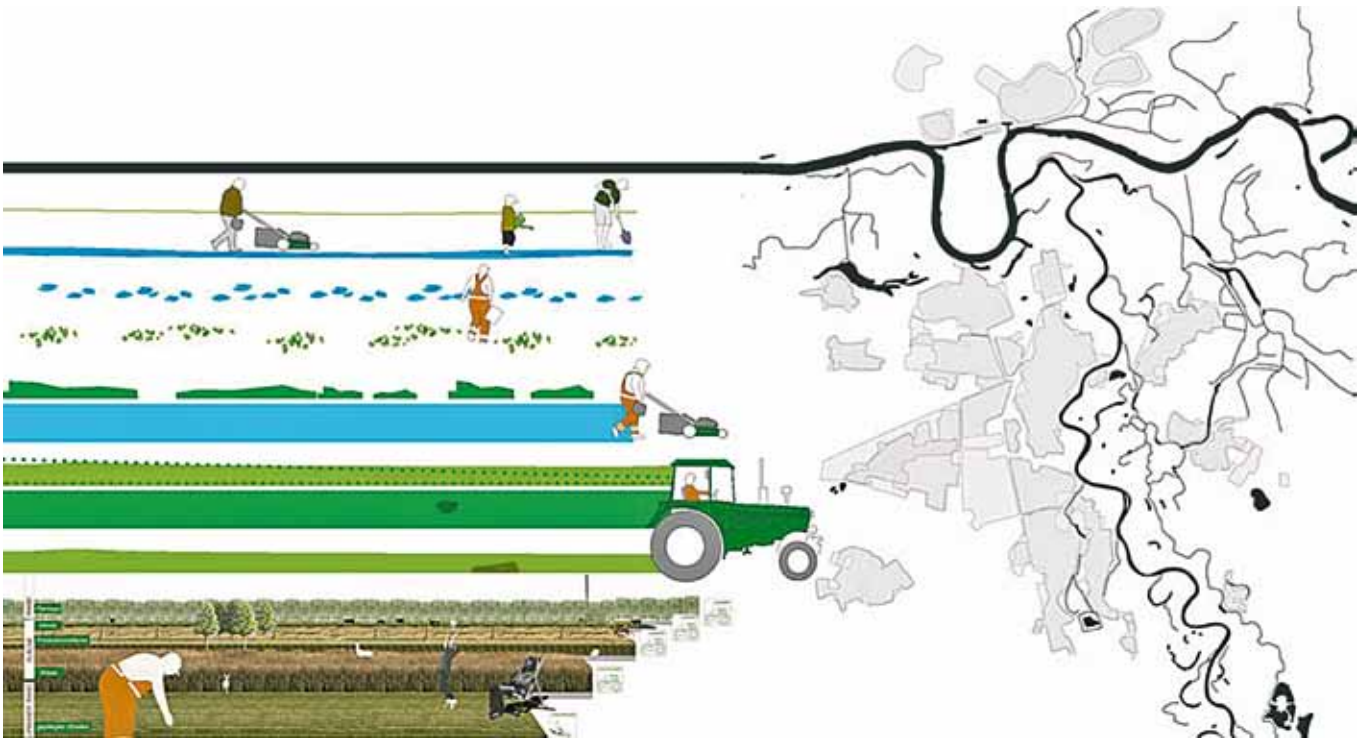
1
Urban cores and landscape zones: the urban renewal concept of the city of Dessau-Rosslau describes a process of redevelopment of specific urban zones, while at the same time extensive landscape corridors are developed in the spaces in between the cores. First steps in this long-term urban development strategy were implemented as a Landscape belt during the IBA 2010.



2
Dessau landscape belt: the open extensive meadowland of the landscape belt is linked with the surrounding cultural landscape of the Dessau-Wörlitz Garden Realm.

cultivation with aesthetic design and innovation (▶2). The approach picks up selected spatial elements of the garden realm, reinterprets them, and reformulates them as a design vocabulary for the stretch of landscape. This operates consciously with rural associations: the resulting open spaces are interpreted as expansive cultivated land, created and farmed with the help of agricultural machinery. Landmarks such as the former smoker tower, now a lookout tower, or a chimney that is now a breed-

ing ground for various bird species, serve as points of orientation in the new open (r)urban landscape. The remaining solitary buildings have been reinterpreted as country houses with so-called estate managers who tend to the needs and communications in the transitional areas between the landscape and local neighborhoods. This vocabulary serves as a spatial design framework that structures the process-oriented, ecological process of (re)cultivation and social appropriation (Langner 2014) (▶3).



3
Cultivation of the landscape over time and by different actors: large-scale sites are maintained by farmers, small-scale sites and the urban edges are used and maintained by volunteers and the municipality. Only by the cooperative interplay of many different actors will the various landscape zones be created over time.

4
New urban meadowland: extensive open meadowland within the inner city of Dessau-Rosslau

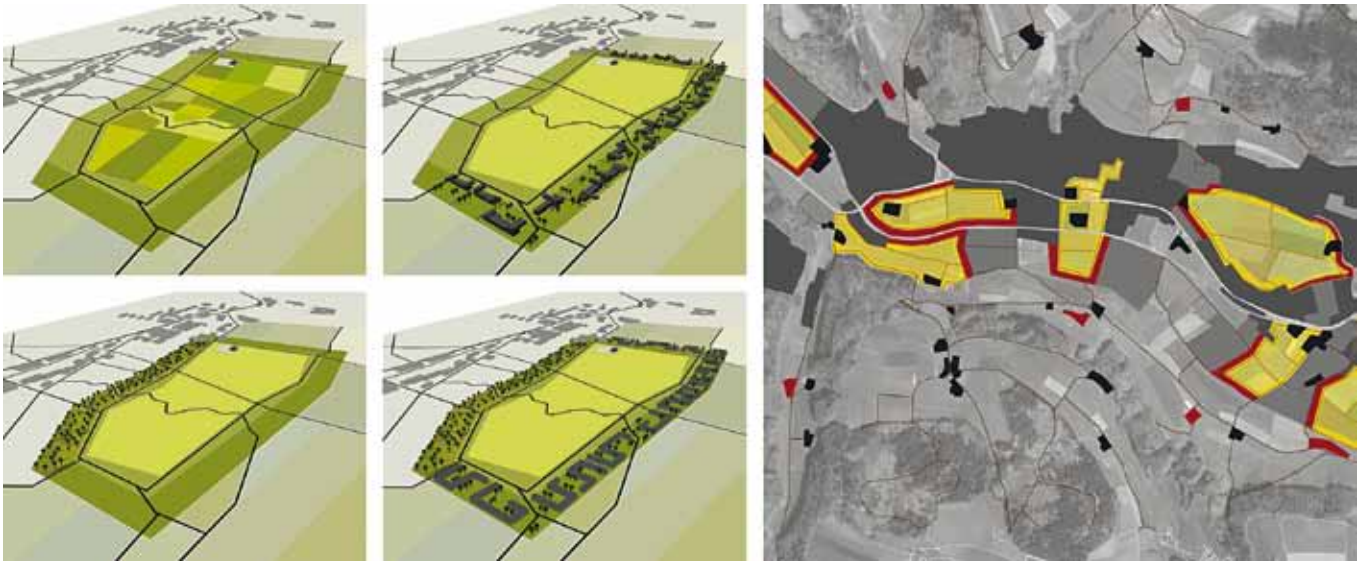
5
Spatial design framework: pathways, landmarks, and viewpoints, tree lines help residents perceive the new landscape zones and function as a common, recognizable language throughout the Dessau region.

Through the means of agricultural cultivation used and specially adapted seed mixtures for grassland, the maintenance requirements for these new urban open spaces are kept to a minimum. It also results in types of grasslands of different structures and species that have been almost eradicated by modern agriculture and only exist otherwise as relics of traditional peasant farming.

The wide open grasslands that urbanites seek when they venture out into the country are now suddenly to be found in the midst of the urban landscape. Open grassland, however, remains an unusual sight in the urban realm and is not widely accepted. The predominant form of vegetation that most town and city dwellers expect to see is neatly mown lawns with planted borders. Extensive, natural grassland, by contrast, is perceived as being unkempt and uncivilized in appearance (Wiens 2010, 42) (►**4**).

It is, therefore, all the more important that different actors assume responsibility for (re)cultivating the area within the structure of the spatial design framework. This is ultimately what differentiates a stretch of abandoned land from a new type of (r)urban open space (►**5**).

6
(Re)structuring the urban development by rural open space: landscape "intarsia" structuring the future settlement development within growing axes in the agglomeration of Bern.



While shrinking towns and cities show us how agricultural farming techniques can bring structures from the rural, agricultural landscape back into our inner cities, the question facing many growing agglomerations is how the expanding city can be connected to its surrounding agricultural landscape.

Projections of (R)urban Landscapes in Growing Agglomerations: "Bern rUrban"

The "Bern rUrban" project plays with the different spatial qualities of urban and rural spaces. The project arose as part of an open ideas competition for "An Image for the Bern Region," the results of which aimed to lead to the development of a spatial and strategic orientation plan for the region in subsequent planning stages.[6]
The project capitalizes on a specific aspect of the Bern region: the prevalence of farmsteads that extend right up to the heart of the city. To retain the characteristic spatial structure resulting from the farmsteads and their surrounding agricultural land for the future, despite changes in agricultural farming methods and the pressure to make land available for development, it was necessary to develop spatial strategies for interweaving settlement structures and agricultural land (▶**6**).
A spatial framework was designed in which the agricultural areas were integrated into another settlement development within the Bern agglomeration. The existing star-shaped arrangement of infrastructure axes in the wider agglomeration were conceived of as development corridors. Between them the concept declared so-called agricultural "intarsia" that may not be built upon in order to maintain the spatial quality of densely built-up areas and areas of open agricultural land in

7
Landscape "intarsia": AgroPark as a possible scenario of open space within the urban axes

close proximity. At the same time, the project considered how this spatial quality can be maintained, even when their conventional agricultural cultivation should lapse at some point in the future, for example as 'agropark,' as common land, or as prairie. The farmsteads would then be reinterpreted as 'land-lofts,' an idea that combines urban lifestyle with rural structures (Koch and Schröder 2006, 20) (▶**7**).

The project used design approaches and images to discuss the future sustainability of agricultural land in the context of a growing urban agglomeration. How will the traditional rural cultural landscape of Bern's hinterland change? And what spaces of possibility can future (r)urban landscapes bring about? This discussion is by no means free of conflicts, especially because it touches on the taboo topic of transforming the traditional peasant-farmed cultural landscape.

Conclusion—Navigating between the Urban and the Rural

The projects shown here present spatial images that, on the one hand facilitate a new way of reading hybrid forms of the city and the country, and on the other hand make it possible to invent, communicate, and negotiate new (r)urban spaces outside prevailing familiar spatial typologies. By comparing, contrasting, connecting, and (re)configuring rural and urban structures as spatial images, it is possible to construct and communicate certain, often ambivalent spatial ideas of (r)urban landscapes. Using these spatial images, we can determine possible courses of action, and at the same time help people individually and collectively to position themselves and see meaning within the complex spatial interdependencies of the urban and the rural.

In this context, the rural perspective offers a key to understanding the spatial ideas designed and utilized in such projects. We can ask the following: What spatial qualities, structures, and characteristics represent the "rural" in these projects? Who relates to the "rural" and why? What ideas of "country life" are transported by such images? In what kinds of landscape do we want to live, and also not want to live?

The rural perspective helps us to acquire a more differentiated understanding of the urban. The city and the country and the associated ascribed meanings and constructions are points of orientation within a dynamic spatial constellation in which rural and urban practices and structures are intertwined at many levels. The question is not just how the rural environment is being transformed by global urbanization processes, but also how the rural is changing the urban and what long-term, sustainable interactions between the urban and rural are conceivable and ultimately also desirable.

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Notes

1 For instance, the subject of the BMBF Science Year 2015 was the "Future of Cities" (https://www.bmbf.de/de/wissenschaftsjahr-2015-im-zeichen-der-zukunftsstadt-219.html).

2 The project partners include the University of Halle-Wittenberg, the University of Potsdam, the Bauhaus University Weimar, and the University of Konstanz (http://www.dorfatlas.uni-halle.de).

3 Wild horses and water buffalos graze within the landscape park Grüner Bogen Paunsdorf. With the help of this grazing project the open character and the biodiversity of the former military area will be preserved by an extensive maintenance strategy. The park itself is a design project by Häfner/Jiménez/Betcke/Jarosch Landscape architecture (http://www.landschaftsarchitektur-heute.de/projekte/details/1737. Accessed April 12, 2016).

4 "Jahrtausendfeld" is an art project by Schaubühne Lindenfels (concept: René Reinhardt) in Leipzig-Plagwitz created during the Expo 2000 (http://www.jahrtausendfeld.de. Accessed April 12, 2016)

5 The Dessau Landscape Belt Project was part of the International Building Exhibition (IBA) Stadtumbau 2010. The development concept "Landschaftszug Dessau" was outlined by the city of Dessau-Rosslau and Station C23, Leipzig between 2007 and 2010. (http://www.dessau.de/Deutsch/Bauen-und-Wohnen/Stadtentwicklung/Stadtumbau/Konzepte/Leitfaden-Landschaftszug. Accessed April 12, 2016).

6 Bern rUrban was outlined by an interdisciplinary team: yellow z urbanism architecture, Berlin, Zürich (Raum- und Stadtplanung), lad+, Hannover (Landschaftsarchitektur), IBV Hüsler AG, Zürich (Verkehrsplanung) (http://yellowz.net/projekte/2005/bern. Accessed April 12, 2016).

Rural Land(scapes). Lessons to Be Learned (?)

Jonna Majgaard Krarup

"Without the city there would be no landscape. In the same way one can claim that without landscape there would be no city."

(van der Velde 2012)

More than half of the world population now lives in urban areas. The process of urbanization is global, and seen from a narrow urban perspective, it may seem as if the rural has outplayed its role. If so, it would then also be the end of the old antagonism in architecture and planning between the rural and the urban; but a closer look into landscape architecture and planning history and theory leads to a more nuanced understanding and thinking on the relationship between rural land(scape) and cities (the urban) than a purely antagonistic one. The concept of landscape within the framework of (landscape) architecture and planning is usually associated with an understanding of landscape as an aesthetic category. Landscape as aesthetic category has always reflected urban conditions and needs, and currently the urban perspective is dominant in discourse and in practice, resulting in somewhat scant attention to be paid on the rural landscape. But as pointed out by van der Velde (2012) "the topographic and productive characteristics of land(scapes) have historically determined where cities arise—as well as having an effect on their form, size, shape and wealth," indicating a kind of meta-land concept, suggesting other, material and structural, and

productive and economical, relationships between land and city than is normally associated with the concept of landscape. This questions the understanding of the concept of landscape normally perceived within the planning and architectural field.

As shown by Raymond Williams in his treatise *The Country and the City* (1973/2011), the definition of the landscape concept impacts our thinking and understanding of the rural. Williams analyzes images of the country and the city in English literature since the sixteenth century, and observes that regarding the relationship between city and country, "real history has been astonishingly varied." Williams debunks the common English notion of rural life as simple, natural, and unadulterated, which leaves an image of the country as a golden age. Williams also points out that depending on the purpose and the circumstances, the city may be described and associated with what is good, modern, educated, and safe, while rural land and rural life are described as the opposite—or vice versa. Williams analysis thus sheds light on how images of the rural are constructed and disseminated through literature, and not just how the rural-urban divide has been reproduced in English literature, but also how this literature has served to justify the existing social order, and thus impacted thinking and ideas on the rural, and on the city (Maclean, Landry and Ward 1999).

Turning from literature to architecture, something similar could be said regarding how the rural has been conceptualized and constructed within urban discourse. A formal and functional division between the rural and the urban characterizes current discourse on urbanization. In a Danish context, this division is emphasized in the planning legislation operating with a rural (open land zone), an urban, and a summerhouse zone, suggesting a sharp and clear division between zones and functions. Also characteristic is the perception of the city as the key to technological, economical, and cultural innovation, leaving little attention to rural issues and potentials. But as Williams noticed in his analysis, "real history has been astonishingly varied." Within landscape architecture and urban planning, there are examples of thinking and projects that seek to bridge the division between the rural and the urban. I will unfold some of these in the following section.

Within current urban discourse, an archipelago of analysis and concepts trying to describe new hybrid spaces and urban forms emerging in suburban and peri-urban areas exist—spatial formations and urban typologies that are outside traditional and conceptual architectural frameworks of understandings. This could be interpreted as an interest in the rural land(scapes), but, "despite the interest in these emerging hybrid spaces on a theoretical level in urban discourse, rural issues have been overshadowed by design's fixation on urbanization. Across design disciplines, the contemporary city is seen as the key to technological, economical and cultural innovation and hence rural issues and potentials so far have received little attention in architectural spatial and planning research" (Krarup, Sörensen and Simbürger 2015).

Why is that so? Is it because the rural has outplayed its role? Is it because the rural land is regardeds a passive resource just waiting for further development i.e., urbanization—indicating an inevitable development process

from natural areas to rural land and landscape and ending up as urban areas? Or is it because our thinking on the rural within planning and landscape architecture is limited by a one-dimensional conceptual framework and orientation which itself reproduces those potentials and values in the rural land(scape) that are overlooked?
My claim is that the rural land(scape), perceived and used actively as an equal player in urban discourse, and especially in addressing impacts of global warming on the built environment such as flooding might hold potentials that will enable us to develop a more substantial climate adaptation plan and ways of thinking.
In order to support this claim, I will first look into some of the definitions of the landscape concept and discuss their relevance regarding the ability to address the rural land from other angles than landscape as an aesthetic category. Secondly, I will discuss examples from urban planning and landscape architectural history and theory focusing on the interdependencies between city and rural land.
To overcome some of the limitations in the conceptual framework regarding climate adaptation planning, and hence to address questions of the potential and role of the rural in current urban discourse it is argued that:
1. a broader landscape concept than a purely aesthetic one is needed; an expanded and site-specific landscape concept, where embedded natural processes are perceived as the guiding principles in climate adaptation planning methodology and thinking;
2. a regional concept, usable as planning unit is required—the region defined by watersheds as the planning unit comprising both cities, rural land, and natural areas, supporting climate adaptation planning guided by natural and cultural processes.

Landscape Notions

According to John Brinckerhoff Jackson (1984), at least three definitions of the landscape concept may be detected; they are interrelated and may be seen as part of a historic, cultural, and technological development.

Landscape #1

The first definition of landscape could be termed as a pre-modern definition, originating in early medieval rural landscape. Here landscape is understood as a collection, or a system of man-made spaces on the surface of earth, where the making—the production of the landscape—could be described as an exchange between the natural resources and conditions and man's ability to use these to provide food, firewood, building material, etc., for his survival. According to Brinckerhoff Jackson (1984), this an old Anglo-Saxon meaning of landscape.
Also, Krebs (2014) states that in twelfth—century Old High German, *lantscaf* denoted a large natural area and its population, emphasizing a relation between land itself and man living there—a lived-in everyday landscape. Common to these definitions is that they are describing an early medieval rural landscape, an inhabited production landscape where the spatial organization and its appearance are the result of activities such as agriculture, forestry, and fishing, and categories such as villages, fields, and forests (Brinckerhoff Jackson 1984).

Landscape #2

The second definition of landscape presupposes the first as it depends on a detachment from it.

It is first by detaching ourselves from the material and fundamental, vital first landscape that we are able to consider landscape as an aesthetic category. The philosopher Joachim Ritter (1963) describes this process of detachment as a pivoting and decisive point in the process of modernization, and in the philosophy of aesthetics. Ritter illustrates his claim by analyzing the story of the young Petrarca's climb of Mount Ventoux in southern France in the fourteenth century. Driven solely by the desire to learn to know such a place's unaccustomed height by immediate contemplation, the young Petrarca sets out and reaches the mountaintop. Standing there he realize that his gaze at the landscapes at the foot of the hill, where people are working in the fields, is beyond his experience and knowledge which had originated in the spiritual tradition from Augustin that he was taught—instead of contemplating on man's spiritual being he has turned himself towards the landscape, and thereby forgot to marvel at himself, and thus forgot to marvel at God.

Petrarca thinks himself foolish and runs down the mountain. He later notes the experience in a letter, and from here it enters the philosophy of aesthetics by Joachim Ritter's interpretation of Petrarca's story as one of the first accounts of an emerging modern view on landscape—landscape as an aesthetic category.

The detached gaze from an outside position became formalized with the construction of perspective, and the perspective became an organizing tool in the production of both landscape and urban space, which was epitomized by the huge gardens and city plans from the baroque period. Gardens became works of art, and landscape a kind of supergarden. With the perspective as a guiding principle, the distinctions between rural and urban spaces are made clear and visible, and the resulting landscape becomes shapely, beautiful, and to some extent self-contained (Brinckerhoff Jackson 1984). The distinction is underlined and supported even further by a separation between the rural production landscape, landscape as an aesthetic object, and the city. Landscape as an aesthetic object is closely linked with the concept of the urban, both of which are distanced from the rural production landscape, and both of which are occupied by serving and accommodating needs and aspirations that originated in an urban environment and urban condition, or to put it otherwise, "urbanites need a type of nature that meets the conditions of urban life" (Andersson, Olsen, and Bramsnaes 1984)—meaning landscape functions as an aesthetic object, as for example a park does.

Landscape #3

According to Brinckerhoff Jackson (1984), the third landscape definition covers landscapes formed by the indigenous organization and development of spaces to serve the needs of the focal community. Social contact, recreation, contact with natural processes, and cultivation (in some cases even agricultural production), are characteristic purposes and functions associated with the third landscape definition. The structural layout of the third landscape is a mixture of small-scale landscapes.

The three landscape definitions do not describe a linear conceptual progression, and the previous definitions are not erased by the latter, the definitions co-exist so to speak, but in an unequal relationship. Referring to Brinckerhoff Jackson, the third definition and its concretization has been overshadowed by the hype around the second and its artistic qualities. The third definition relates to what is sometimes described as the vernacular. Vernacular architecture is traditionally associated with the domestic and functional rather than public or monumental buildings. Similarly, it is rare to find public spaces such as an urban park described as vernacular. Traditionally, private gardens and allotment gardens may be defined as vernacular. Brinckerhoff Jackson's definition of the vernacular differs a bit from this by shifting focus from objects to contexts; "a good working definition of vernacular architecture: it is the visible result of a confrontation between the aspirations of the occupying family and the realities of the environment—natural, social, economic." (Brinckerhoff Jackson 1976) Likewise, studies from the end of the sixties began to focus less on the beauty of the vernacular building architecture and more on the environmental, technological, and social contexts in which they were built (Arboleda 2016), thus redefining the concept by changing its focus from the objects themselves to the contexts and embedded conditions which make the production of the object possible.

The New Rural?

The third landscape definition points towards landscape as something more than landscape as an aesthetic category—it is also landscape as context and condition; it is inhabited and provides the inhabitants different services such as food, energy, and materials, but also recreation, aesthetic experiences, social contact, and contact with natural processes. It is a landscape formed by the sum of individuals and the confrontation between their aspirations and the realities of the environment and formal rules and regulations. The landscape concretization thus emerges through use and regulation, and not as a product of an overarching design concept and process. In this respect, the third landscape definition refers to the first definition. But it also differs from it; the third landscape definition is not necessarily tied only to the rural land(scapes) and agricultural production, but may also be seen as a rural presence and legacy, having an impact upon the urban and urbanity. The notion of the rural is thus not confined by zoning principles, or associated with specific professions and modes of production. In some cases, it may even be interpreted as an aestheticization of the traditional rural, through which the new rural becomes an aesthetic object with a touch of something exotic and authentic. In this process, the new rural contributes to the reproduction and justification of the divide between the rural and the urban, and it manifests itself in the form of counter-urban(ite) lifestyles and activities within an urban framework. In Denmark, the formation of the new rural is supported by the structural development in industrialized agriculture,

where a spatial concentration of ever-growing industrial/agricultural production units is seen. Due to production modes, economy, expandability, and avoidance of neighbors' complaints, these industrialized farms are mostly localized in less densely populated areas, leaving minor farms and arable land in the vicinity of the cities to be transformed into leisure areas such as golf courses, riding schools, and into leisure farms, where urbanites dreaming of a more authentic life than provided in the city have the possibility to fulfill their dreams of a rural life in contact with nature with some animals, a kitchen garden, and a Land Rover.

Landscape 0.0—Landscape as a Hyperobject

Confronted with the realities of natural processes in his living environment, man's answer has historically been to overcome the limiting aspects in both agricultural production and in urban planning and landscape architecture by using and developing technology. Fertilizer and drainage are just two examples of agricultural technology developed to increase the outcomes and benefits of the production. Also in urban planning and landscape architecture, drainage and control of water flows are technological tools used to develop and build on wet areas that would otherwise be left for other purposes. This way of thinking and acting was coined by the Danish biologist Jesper Hoffmeyer as, "The Technological Fix," which refers to the feature of modern civilization that very often we try to solve our basic problems in a way similar to drug addicts: we find a technical *solution* which gives us a temporary resurgence, but in turn makes us extremely dependent and makes the subsequent downturn even more bleak (Birkholm 2008). Conventional farming is to a large extent based on technological fixes, which have become a *Catch-22* for the production and the profession.

This attitude towards nature and natural processes has been questioned, and have for some led to a thinking characterized by a deeper understanding of the natural processes and the limits of natural resources, and it has led to the development of methods to use, mimic, and benefit from these natural processes. One line of this thinking has been termed 'ecosystem services,' focusing on how natural systems and processes may provide different services to us. This thinking is based on an instrumental and economic understanding of nature and natural resources, which is underlined by value calculations of ecosystem services, as exemplified by The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB), a global initiative focused on "making nature's values visible," and, "to mainstream the values of biodiversity and ecosystem services into decision-making at all levels." The idea is to see natural processes and phenomena as something that man may profit on and use for man's purposes, and instead of trying to overcome barriers and limitations in these phenomena, to co-oporate and work with them and to imitate what man decides are helpful natural processes in fulfilling man's aspirations—because it is cheaper than trying to control, bend, or erase them.

"Making nature's values visible" is helpful in arguing for an economically and materially more sustainable

relationship with landscape and natural processes. The language of numbers and figures seems easier to communicate and digest by decision-makers at all levels, but calculations cannot replace, organize, or give form; social, spatial, and aesthetic aspects also need to be taken into consideration and taken care of—if we understand planning and landscape architecture as more than the bare distribution of areas and functions, and the result as the sum of adding individual projects.

The confrontational aspects between the realities of the environment and man's aspirations are exposed by global warming as it questions our relationship with nature and landscape, but also questions what nature is. The impacts of global warming on the built environment are illuminating a general detachment from landscape and a lack of understanding of the impacts of natural processes on urban planning and architecture. The detachment seems even to be supported by a prevailing understanding of landscape as an aesthetic object. But global warming is a game changer, pointing out the detachment itself as a limitation.

Seeing global warming and climate change within the framework of landscape definition three suggests that global warming and the resulting climate change are to be understood as unavoidable confrontational realities and conditions. Following such an understanding opens up a chance to rethink and reconnect cities with their landscapes, and to understand rural landscapes as participants and players in the city's environment, thereby leading to an understanding of landscape as the habitat of cities.

Global Warming—Game Over

Besides acknowledging that there is a ninety to ninety-nine percent probability that greenhouse gases emitted as a byproduct of human activities are causing the ongoing climate changes (IPCC 2013), we also have to acknowledge that global warming is a game changer with impacts on the architectural disciplines.

The phenomenon of climate changes may be understood as a hyperobject (Morton 2013), an entity of such vast temporal and spatial dimensions that it defeats the traditional idea about what an object is. According to Morton, "hyperobjects seem to force something on us, something that affects some core ideas of what it means to exist, what earth is, what society is." In this understanding, climate change is an inescapable and omnipresent condition—a game changer.

In a Danish context, climate changes are primarily manifested in an interaction between modified wind and precipitation patterns, and increasing temperature and a rising sea level (IPPC 2013 and DMI 2010). The individual factors in the process often act together, which is why Paskal (2009) suggests that climate changes leads to "environmental changes." She illustrates this by referring to damages on buildings, roads, and energy delivery systems in permafrost areas, which now no longer are permanently deep-frozen, and thus no longer provide stable bases. Global warming thus impacts our understandings and notions of not only climate *per se* but of nature. Therefore global warming has an impact on man's interaction with nature and natural phenomena, and hence on our perception of landscape, planning, and architecture.

Following this line of thinking suggests a kind of meta-landscape concept, which primarily is characterized by natural and material processes (Larsen 1996), but also by cultural processes, because they are part of the package, meaning landscape may be described as a hyperobject (Morton 2013), an inescapable and omnipresent condition and reality ruled and defined first and foremost by embedded natural processes—Landscape 0.0.

"Then Boyarsky asked ominously, 'Where do you go from here?'"

(Koolhaas/OMA 1995)

Turning towards urban planning and landscape architectural history and theory, there are examples focusing on interdependencies between city and rural land. Some of these may provide insights and approaches to act with and within landscape understood as a hyperobject.

Utile Dulcis

Stephen Switzer, garden designer and writer, wrote in 1718/42 his treatise, *Iconographia Rustica/The Nobleman, Gentleman, and Gardener's Recreation,* coining the concept of, *Ornamental Farming/Ferme Ornée*. Ornamental farming concerns a design strategy aimed at combining aesthetic priorities of the landscape garden with the utility of a working farm. Switzer formulated his design strategy in a poem, in Latin, called "The Rustic Verse":

"Utile qui dulci miscens // ingentia Rura // Simplex Munditiis ornat // puctum hic tulit omne."

Translated, it says something like, "A judicious mixture and incorporation // of the pleasures of the country // with the profits."

One of the best examples of ornamental farming is the Wörlitz Gartenreich in the province of Saxony-Anhalt in Germany. Wörlitz Gartenreich came into being in the period from 1765–1817, initiated and planned by Prince Leopold III Friedrich Franz von Anhalt Dessau, architect Friedrich Wilhelm von Erdmannsdorf, and gardener Johann Friedrich Eyserbeck.

The park covers an area of 142 square kilometers and is located along the river Elbe in Biosphere Mittelelbe. It may be described as a didactic landscape, which served both to educate in advanced agricultural techniques of that time and to exemplify liberalism and the ideas of the Enlightenment. Among those were cultural and educational ideas, which is why both facilities to disseminate agricultural technology and schools for the citizens were built in the little principality.

An interesting point within the context of this paper is that the structural layout of Gartenreich Wörlitz is based on a careful reading of the landscape and the embedded natural processes ruled by the river Elbe. The little town of Wörlitz and the castle are thus not situated on the riverbanks of the Elbe, but with a distance to the river and on a little natural rise in the terrain. Likewise, part of the infrastructure is placed on dikes. Between the town and the Elbe, an old forest and the wet meadow areas were kept undeveloped and are now part of the largest complex of floodplain forest in Central Europe. Together with the dikes and the careful positioning of the town within the terrain, this floodplain forest and unbuilt wet meadow areas functioned then and now as primary and structural

protection measures that help to protect the town, the main infrastructure, and institutions against flooding. Even still, it is not enough—the flooding in 2002 and 2013 were so extensive that dikes and buildings had to be further secured with sandbags and additional secondary protection measures (Trauzettel 2013).

The primary and structural measures are the historical infrastructure, "the tightly woven relational network of single elements. Roads, alleys, garden ornaments, individual structures, ditches, dikes, and the overall view are relations and vistas, which dominate everything. In its complexity, this network is the foundation of the Gartenreich idea" (Ringkamp and Janssen 2000; translation mine), and thus the decisive and guiding structure in the design of the Gartenreich. As such Gartenreich Wörlitz exemplifies a landscape reading that accepts and works with the embedded natural processes as guiding principles and inescapable conditions of the design.

Evolutionary Cities

The Scottish biologist, sociologist, geographer, philanthropist, and town planner Patrick Geddes published his book *Cities in Evolution in 1915*. The book reflects Geddes's wide scientific interests, and his view on the modern city as evil, and as infected with both social and civic diseases. In order to restore the city, and citizenship, civics and town planning therefore had to advance together. Geddes claimed that through the use of his universal mantra, Survey—Analysis—Plan, the town planner was able to diagnose and cure the evilness of the city. According to Geddes every city contained a latent ideal city, and through a survey and an analysis, the planner was able to identify this ideal city in disguise, and evoke it in the plan, that would reveal the past, the present, and a future—ideal—city. The city itself was only one component of a region, and of a regional system, in which the historic development of the city and its inhabitants was inscribed. The city's and its inhabitant's mental and bodily health depended on the countryside; why a detachment from the countryside would lead to illness. Therefore, Geddes stressed the importance of seeing the city as part of something larger, namely as part of the region. According to Hysler-Rubin (2011), "Geddes used the region, 'a representative section of the universe, as a basic geographical unit, claiming that it embraced all possible modes of human life and symbolizing comprehensiveness in the order of nature." This idea was epitomized and illustrated by the famous Valley Section. The valley section was, according to Geddes, a universaly applicable understanding, usable across time, and cultural and geographical settings.

Grounded Cities

Both Frits Palmboom and Marcel Smets have advocated a geomorphic basis for analyzing and planning cities. In his 1987 study, "Rotterdam Urbanized Landscape," Palmboom, an architect and urban planner, prompted a return to landscape context and underlying landscape characteristics such as topography, geomorphology, drainage patterns, vegetation types, and historical settlement forms in the layout of new urban areas. On this basis, Palmboom has developed an approach and method in which, "focus [is] on the interaction between urban design and landscape, or, in more general terms, the interaction between intervention and substratum.

We see the urban environment as a layered landscape, in which processes of landscape genesis interact with human occupation. Interventions take place simultaneously on many layers" (Palmboom 2013).
In his 2002 article, "Grid, Casco, Clearing and Montage," urban planner Marcel Smets suggests different urban design approaches as a kind of taxonomy. Especially the casco approach is interesting for this discussion. Unlike the grid, which is mostly superimposed on the landscape, the casco, or hull, is derived from it. It reflects the constitutive form of the landscape and is based on local geological and hydrological conditions. The ambition in the casco approach is "to establish order on a larger scale for "higher" nature as fundamental to landscape formation so as to allow flexibility for "lower" nature on a smaller scale" (Smets 2002).
Smets argues that the casco approach is a means to manage uncertainty in urban planning,

"At a time when grand ideas and beliefs (progress, justice, equity) have disappeared, when shared myths and narratives have lost their meaning, the casco wants to ground a project on the evident foundations of a physical and geographic logic expressed by the site. I consider the casco philosophy's search for a legitimising truth in the landscape, which allows going ahead and working out consistent proposals even in a time of uncertainty, more significant than the form of the frame it advances or the degree of freedom it leaves to be filled in."

(Smets 2002)

A third example is the so-called "Dry Feet Theory," formulated by urban planner and architect Peter Bredsdorff in 1973. Bredsdorff explains that his theory originates in his fascination of maps, and especially in the orohydrographic map; a map that only shows the surface topography and its lakes, bogs, streams, and coastline—in short, elevations and water. In particular, one old orohydrographic map of Denmark, on which the natural watersheds were marked, trigged Bredsdorff's interest, and he began to study the historical relationship between the landscape—especially the water flows and watersheds—infrastructure, and urban formation. He saw the watershed structure as nature's own infrastructural network and spatial and regional organization, and understood how man in historic times had used his ability to read the land and the embedded natural processes, and to settle, cultivate, and transport himself accordingly. On the basis of his new understanding, Bredsdorff developed a theory and a tool—"The Dry Feet Theory"—

based on a cross-reading of orohydrographic maps and urban plans. Geddes inspired Bredsdorff in emphasizing the importance of the region—"the naturally connected region or province"—as the main planning level, but Bredsdorff suggested what to understand by, "the naturally connected," by pointing to watersheds as the defining framework and definition of a region.

Lessons and Suggestions

These examples from urban and landscape architectural theory and practice all emphasize relationships between landscape conditions and urban and landscape planning and architecture; some even go further and refer back to the Roman ideal of the farm as a production landscape—a rural landscape—as an entity. In this case, as a principality and a framework around which functional, economic, and social community form, with the patron in his rural villa situated both in the middle of the entity but also keeping a suitable distance to the rural production through both the spatial layout and the beautification of the production and production facilities, as exemplified in Gartenreich Wörlitz.

Patrick Geddes's approach to the city and urban planning was based in a cross-disciplinary thinking of the city as an organism among other organisms in a system, exemplified by the Valley section, a regional entity originated in the landscape. Both Geddes and Franz von Anhalt, and Erdmannsdorf and Eyserbeck were influenced by ideals and societal changes of that time, and each of them responded according to their reasoning and with the means and tools at their disposal. Especially interesting within the scope of this paper is Geddes's proposal to understand the city as an organism and part of a landscape entity, the region. In doing so, Geddes, besides being a pupil of Darwin, could also have been inspired by ideas on a general philosophy or unifying science emerging in the nineteenth century that had the concept of organism as the central idea. This was a thinking that aimed at a kind of holistic understanding, "a continuum, as opposed to the unit, that not only is the sum of otherwise independently existing parts, but is structured such that the parts can only be explained by their place and functions in the whole, since the whole and the parts are mutual purposes and means for each other" (Lübcke 1983). Applying the organism idea to the city scale, proposes a perception of the city as a dynamic phenomenon related to, and formed and transformed in relation to other cities, the landscape, society, natural resources, etc., as part of an entity.

Palmboom and Smets are not occupied with the same kind of holistic thinking as Geddes was, but both responded to the dynamics of landscape and society, and of their time, by suggesting new ways of analyzing and working with the city. Thus, they both display how tightly interwoven theorizing and design are to each other as they developed within the architectural disciplines. So too does Bredsdorff, but Bredsdorff's focuses on the landscape relation and especially on watersheds as the framework to understand the formation and organization of cities, infrastructure, and transportation and land use within. Bredsdorff develops and defines Geddes's conception of the region by turning towards the natural processes in the landscape itself.

Landscape 0.0

If we now return to the discussion of the landscape concept and relate this to the examples discussed above, the question of the rural may be reintroduced to the discussion.

The discussion of the three definitions of landscape by Brinckerhoff Jackson forms the basis for a first contribution to a revised landscape concept—landscape as a hyperobject, Landscape 0.0, defined and guided first and foremost by embedded natural processes. The first definition of landscape is related to the early medieval rural landscape, and as such a pre-modern definition. Landscape is a resource, and the landscape features arise from its use. It is a small-scale landscape and it is an inhabited landscape. The second definition of landscape, landscape as an aesthetic object, presupposes the first, as it depends on a detachment from it. It is first by detaching ourselves from the first landscape, the pre-modern rural landscape, that we are able to consider landscape as an aesthetic category. Man's emancipation from landscape as living context makes way for a further separation between the rural production landscape, which continues to exist, but outside the framework of urban discourse, and landscape as an aesthetic object and the city. Landscape as an aesthetic object is closely linked with the concept of the urban, both distanced from the rural production landscape, and both occupied by serving and accommodating needs and aspirations originated in an urban environment and urban condition.

The third landscape definition tries to rehabilitate landscape as living environment by applying the concept of the vernacular. Landscape is understood as the sum of individuals and the confrontation between their aspirations and the realities of the environment and formal rules and regulations. In comparison with the first landscape, the third landscape definition is not necessarily tied only to the rural landscapes or associated with specific professions and modes of production, but may also be understood as a rural presence and legacy within the urban realm. This allows for interpretations of the rural that manifests itself in a form of counter-urban(ity) lifestyles and activities within an urban understanding and framework—a new rural—that on the one hand contributes to a reproduction and justification of the divide between the rural and the urban, and hence the rural becomes an aesthetic object with a touch of something exotic and authentic in opposition to the urban.

On the other hand, understanding global warming and climate change within the framework of landscape definition three suggests that global warming and the resulting climate change are to be understood as unavoidable confrontational realities and conditions—as a hyperobject, an inescapable and omnipresent condition—a game changer. Following this offers a chance to rethink cities in relation to rural vernacular. For example, the confrontation between man's aspirations and the realities of the environment, which lead to an understanding of landscape defined first and foremost by embedded natural processes—Landscape 0.0. This landscape is the context that cities are confronted with. Landscape 0.0 is a meta-landscape concept, which is primarily characterized by natural and material processes, but also by cultural processes, because they are part of the package,

meaning that other landscape definitions exist within the meta-concept.

Region 0.0

There is no universal definition of a city region, but three elements seem to be common in various conceptualizations: the core(s), the hinterland(s), and the linkage(s). Also common to these seem to be the spatial demarcation in relation to functional urban areas, usually defined in terms of commuting patterns and density of economic activities, and/or population. But climate change doesn't respect such de-naturalized definitions and categorizations, instead they become barriers and forces us to rethink and reformulate the concept of the regional. Bredsdorff's watershed-defined regions may thus be seen as a promising proposal and an answer that even complies with the conceptual framework of Landscape 0.0. This suggests embedded natural conditions in the watershed regions to be operationalized as guiding principles for developing a relational urban and rural planning on a regional scale. In contrast to Geddes's ambition to frame an universal regional concept and approach, Bredsdorff's thinking suggests a site-specific and site-sensitive regional concept and approach. In light of current climate adaptation challenges in planning, it therefore seems interesting and relevant to discuss further whether such a "back to nature" approach, within the conceptual framework of Landscape 0.0, might hold a potential to develop and qualify climate change adaptation planning on a regional scale defined by natural watershed structures, Region 0.0.

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Networked Urbanism

Interview with Belinda Tato, ecosistema urbano, Madrid

Your office name, ecosistema urbano, brings with it a certain tension that somehow combines unexpected contrasts. How did you come to this name and what do you want to express with it?

It took us a while to choose a name or concept that communicated our interests and the complex reality of urban issues we face. We found the idea of 'ecosystem' an appealing one, its definition implies a group of interconnected elements formed by the interaction of a community with their environment. This relationship between the natural and the artificial aims for a balance between these two worlds, and reflects the issues we care about when designing architecture and practicing territorial and urban planning.

In your presentation, you said that during your studies the planning approach mainly focused on infrastructure and the physical environment. How would you describe the situation today?

I believe there is a clear shift between the object-focused educational approach from the nineties towards a more polyhedral approach and understanding of cities and design that is happening today. There is a growing interest in considering processes and interactions and taking the social, cultural, or economic aspects into account leading to more comprehensive and ambitious proposals to transform reality.

Which approach does your office have today? How would you describe the current role of the architect and planner?

That is not an easy question to answer briefly! We re-

cently made an effort to try to summarize our approach and the result is a kind of manifesto in ten points (http://ecosistemaurbano.com/portfolio/our-approach).

Urban. Social. Design. Three words that describe our dedication: the urban context, the social approach, and the design understood as an action, an interaction, and a tool for transformation. Understanding types of behavior and processes at different levels is crucial.

Creativity is a network. In a globalized world, creativity is the capacity to connect things innovatively and thus we understand that the protagonist of the creative process is not just a team but an open and multilayered design network.

Community first. Cities are created and maintained by people for people, and urban development only makes sense when the community cares about it. We work to empower the communities to drive the projects that affect them, so social relevance is guaranteed.

Going glocal. Just as cities have residents and visitors, and planning is made at different scales, every urban project is born in a constant movement between the direct experience and specificity of the local context, and the global, shared flow of information and knowledge.

Managing conflict and complexity. Accepting that not everything is under our control. Instead of simplifying the urban environment, we prefer to admit its vast character and understand our work as a thin layer—with limited and, at times, unpredictable effects—carefully inserted into that complexity.

Learning by doing. Our experience grows through practice. We know what we can do, and we challenge ourselves to do what we think we should be doing. We solve the unexpected issues as we move, and then we take our lesson from the process and the results.

Planning… and being flexible. Urban development is what happens in the city while others try to plan it.

We think ahead and make our dispositions, but we are always ready for reality to change our plans… mostly for the better. Rigidity kills opportunity, participation, and urban life.

Embracing transdisciplinarity. We assume that our role as professionals is evolving, disciplinary bonds are loosening, urban projects are complex, and circumstances are continuously changing. This requires open-minded professionals, flexible enough to adapt their roles and skills and to use unusual tools.

Technology as a social tool. Today's technology enables us to better relate and interact with each other and with the surrounding environment. As the digital-physical divide narrows and the possibilities multiply, it becomes an increasingly significant element in urban social life.

Keeping it open. Open means transparent, accessible, inclusive, collaborative, modifiable, reproducible. Open means more people can be part of it and benefit from it. These are the attributes that define a project made for the common good.

From your presentation, it emerged that the integration of the local conditions—as a climatic and social issue—represent an important focus of your work. How do you rate the relationship between global-local influence in relation to the architectural or urban design?

This is a very interesting question, and one we have asked ourselves several times. We have worked mostly abroad during the last years, and over and over we find the same situation where we have to balance the local and the global dimensions of design and planning. Local conditions are always the main terms of reference for our work. They give accuracy and pertinence to our proposals. They not only determine the boundaries we have to respect, the resources we have available, or the particularities we have to take into account, but also the potential for improvement that each particular place has. Local context is a source of invaluable site-specific knowledge, even if that knowledge is not always conscious or apparent, especially to locals. Opening a project to participation is a great way to make local values stand out and locals become self-aware… if you are able to ask the right questions and then read between the lines, of course. But relying solely on local conditions rarely provides the best solutions. You usually find situations that have become stagnant precisely by the lack of confrontation and external feedback. Then you need to confront the local 'ways,' often loaded with prejudices or relative narrowness, or with something else. And that is where global influence comes into play: the contrast, the opposition that clears concepts, breaks groupthink and gives a relative measure to local values. Global is the mirror that local can use to become self-conscious. We could speak of bringing knowledge from the global to the local, or even generating local knowledge by confronting it with the global. But it is also creativity that is being created or transferred. The ability to connect, articulate, and interpret different contexts is crucial whenever a new approach is needed and local conditions have proven insufficient to deliver it.

You showed us some practical examples of your current work, which pursues sustainable approaches in terms of water recycling systems for the kindergarten in Madrid (▶2, 3) or climatic adaptations for the Expo pavilion in Shanghai (▶1). What opportunities do you see for the implementation of sustainable planning tools or strategies in larger, urban scale projects?

Urban planning and urban design have a great impact on people's lives, shaping the way we live, move, relate, consume, etc… In addition to this, its impact will be of a long term as it is less ephemeral than architecture. For these reasons, it is important to design integrating with nature, its cycles and processes, taking advantage of the environment and optimizing interventions.

Let us take a closer look at the countryside: in the current city-centered discourse, rural spaces are often dismissed as declining or stagnating. However, rural spaces also play a critical role in sustainable development, as an inextricably linked counterpart, but also as a complement to the growing city, as extraction sites, natural reservoirs for food, fresh water and air, or as leisure spaces. Do we need to formulate a (new) vision of 'ruralism'? What would be your definition of the future rural? What new concepts for the rural exist in Spain?

When talking about ecosystems, it is crucial to understand the interwoven connections between the urban and the rural, and how they relate and affect each other

1
Air Tree Shanghai: Public Space and outdoor pavilion for the City of Madrid at Expo 2010 Shanghai, China. The Air Tree emerges as an experimental prototype of intervention in contemporary urban public space, capable of reactivating sites and creating the conditions to empower the use of the collective space. By sensors it is connected in real-time with the climatic conditions of Shanghai, constantly adopting the optimal physical and energy consumption configuration to generate climatic comfort for the citizens.

2
Ecópolis plaza kindergarten and new public space, Rivas Vaciamadrid, Spain. The solution combines passive energy saving systems together with active systems, providing the highest eco-label (A grade) of Spanish law.

3
All the waste water from the building is naturally purified by a macrophyte lagoon incorporated in the public space. This recycled water is stored under the ground within a gravel tank and then used for all the irrigation needs of the park. This artificial landscape emulates a natural riverbank.

in a critical balance. Although the urban expansion has some environmental consequences, there are also some interesting phenomena happening. As today's IT keeps us connected and allows us to work remotely, this neoruralism enables us to have a renewed vision of the territory and its possibilities, offering development opportunities in towns that have been abandoned for decades, for instance in Spain. This new trend is transforming these abandoned towns into new activity hubs, creating a new migration flux from cities. It will be possible to measure the socioeconomic impact of this activity in a few years (▶**4, 5**).

The once remote and quiet countryside is now traversed by global and regional flows of people, goods, waste, energy, and information, interrelating it with the larger urban system. Is a new set of criteria for understanding and appreciating the rural required? How would you measure what is rural and what is urban?

In a globalized world with an unprecedented ongoing process of urbanization, and under the impact of climate change and global warming, it is becoming more and more difficult to precisely define the limits between the rural and the urban as the urban footprint is somehow atomizing and gobbling the rural. Cities are the combination and result of the simultaneous interaction between nature and artificial technology, and their ecological footprint expansion forces the extraction of natural resources from even further sources, with obvious environmental consequences. At the local scale, it is necessary to point out the close relationship between the way a city relates to its environment, the way it manages its natural resources, and the quality of life it can provide to its inhabitants. This could be summarized as: the more sustainable a city/territory is, the better its inhabitants will live.

4
Ecological Boulevard for a social and bioclimatically conditioned public space, Madrid, Spain.

5
This system, commonly used in the green house industry, is capable of lowering temperature by around 10° C. It goes into action when a temperature sensor detects temperatures above 27° C in its surroundings.

What role do villages and smaller towns have in a world in which the majority live in cities? Could you comment on and describe a bit about the situation in Spain or the other countries you have been working in?

In cities, innovation and creativity concentrate and emerge naturally. The rural environment also requires people willing to create, to innovate, to connect, etc…. This creative ruralism could lead to the creation of eco-techno-rural environments, which would provide some of the features of the rural combined with specific services of the urban...the perfect setting for innovation to take place!

Which role could the rural play at the frontlines of regional transformation and sustainability? What are the existing and potential connections between urban and rural spaces?

The rural could provide a complementary lifestyle for people fleeing from the city to re-connect or re-localize. At the same time, we would need to explore and expand technology's possibilities, pushing its actual limits, and foreseeing potential new services that could enhance life in the rural by making it more diverse, fulfilling, and even... more global.

And what role can urban design play in preparing rural life and space for the future? Is the rural an arena for 'urban' design at all?

I think the challenge would be to create the conditions for social life and interaction. We do have the conditions for that activity to happen digitally, but how can we foster social activity in low-density environments? Would it be necessary to create small urban nodes in the rural? These issues are interesting challenges we have to face conceptually and design-wise.

Ruralism in the European Context

"Landungsprozesse." Structural Development Policies and Their Effects towards Resilient Urban and Rural Regions

Andy Westner

The research project "Landungsprozesse" was initiated within the context of an expedition to the southeastern region of Bavaria together with a group of students from the Technical University of Munich. In an accompanying seminar, the prevailing structural situation in that region was examined in more detail with a view to potentials and deficits of productivity in rural areas, demographic change, educational institutions, energy production, tourism, and settlement development. Most of these topics were decisively affected by the implementation of structural measures from the state of Bavaria to promote and secure "equal living and working conditions" all over Bavaria. Based on the following developments, which are located in that area, these transformation processes and their downstream effects can be described and researched in detail—the automobile cluster around the Isar delta, the Bavarian "Triangle of Chemistry" at the German-Austrian border, and the Spa Triangle across the rural district of Rottal/Inn.

Equality ≠ Equity—Political and Economic Developments and the Transformation of the Hinterland

From a political and economic perspective, the urban development model has been successful in many ways and with few exceptions—beyond funding, eccentric economic effects, and niches—it seems that rural regions can only be effective when it comes to an appreciable degree of urban and metropolitan expansions or escape strategies. In order to accomplish the ambitious challenge of spatial and regional planning, along with estab-

lishing and securing equal living and working conditions in all urban and rural regions, the focus is on implementing structural measures together with subsidies in structurally weak regions.

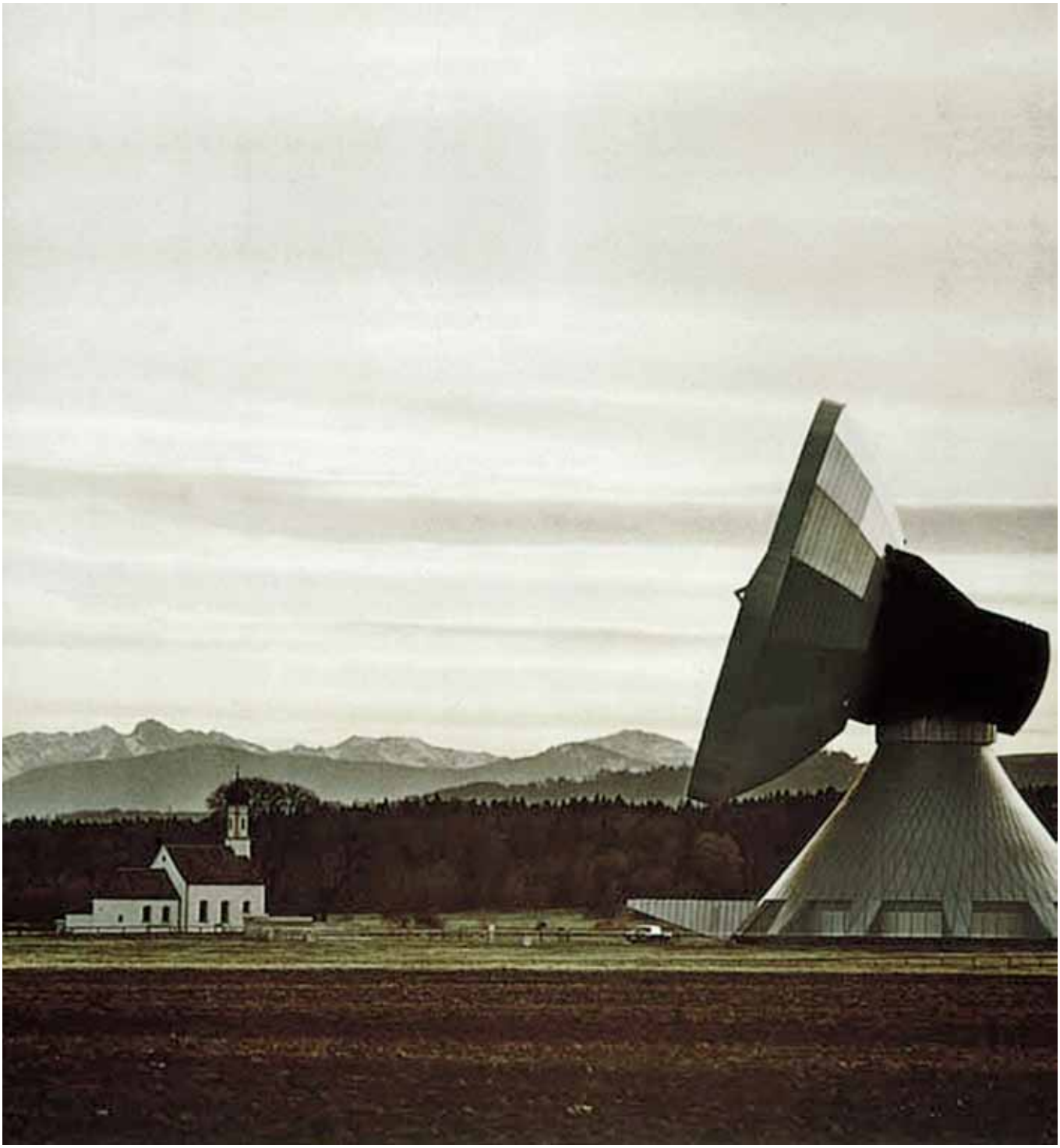
These selective developments within certain regions or corridors lead in part towards a totally urbanized hinterland, but what does it mean for areas that are not directly affected by these measures in terms of deficiency, those that are lacking compensation and differences in potential? The hinterland cannot become an economic spillover for the centers, meaning that rural regions need the city as well as vice versa. For a better understanding of these transformations and their downstream effects, some of those measures and subsidies were put under the magnifying glass.

In terms of spatial development, it can be observed that investors mainly select their location on the basis of site efficiency, favorable conditions and where highest profits are promised and politicians prefer to operate on the side of fast success (e.g. the past and current development of the Spa Triangle). The regional planning policy usually operates with selective structural support measures to achieve short-term actions with fast direct and indirect effects to satisfy demands. The consequences—induced and catalytic effects—which trigger these measures, are difficult to predict and barely possible to plan for. Spatial planning often hides behind methodological and technical questions within administrative boundaries and evades an accurate and conscientious consideration. Competition among neighboring communities and counties often restricts a reasonable cooperation on the municipal level. The risks and opportunities in each region have to be fairly distributed. Is there an appropriate way to implement new structural developments and flagship projects in metropolitan and rural areas to achieve equity rather than equality? Peripheral, rural, and structurally weak areas should be able to go towards an equitable future—preferably self-designed, but supported by appropriate conditions ensured by the state. This does not necessarily lead to equality, but to self-created conditions (▶1).

Phenomena "Landungsprozesse"

The structural development policy, in a direct and indirect manner, causes subsequent effects within rural regions. Up to now, the system of those induced and catalytic effects is less well known. Therefore, a deeper knowledge of the impact of these structural measures in rural regions is needed. "Landungsprozesse," following the meaning of disembarkation or 'landing process,' describes those consequences and effects which are triggered by injected measures in rural areas that are dependent on the surrounding metropolitan centers, how these measures have been implemented, and how they spread out and embed themselves over time—just how they landed.

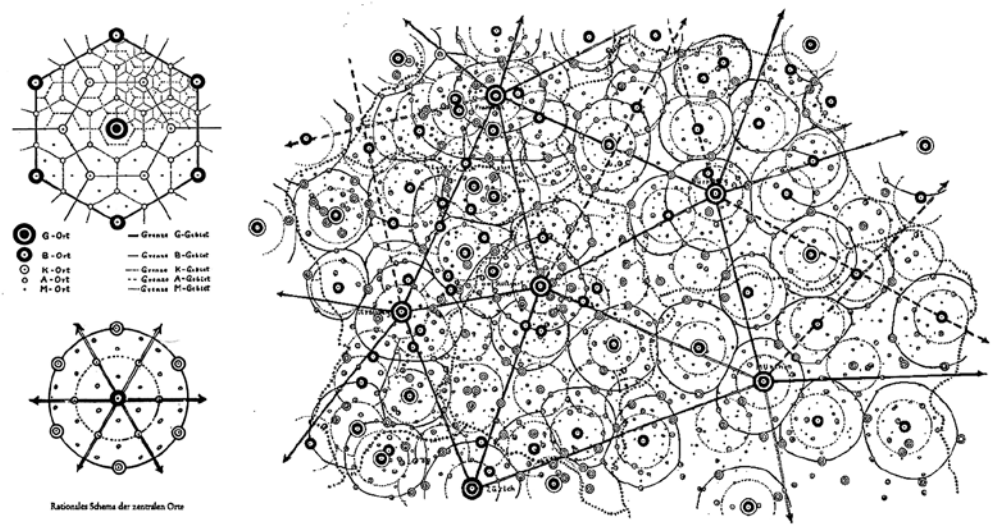
The research project "Landungsprozesse" identifies and isolates the logic of these processes and traces them back into spatially specific assumptions. A closer look reveals that direct and indirect effects launch processes with induced and catalytic effects that are difficult to control and assess in terms of spatial planning. On a long-term basis, these processes modify rural areas substantially,



with partially negative consequences for a whole region. Spatial planning can usually only respond to these processes and not act upon them. The project questions the achieved effects and resulting side effects, unexpected resulting space relationships, areas of activities, and identities aside from those of the administrative borders and Walter Christaller's Central Place Theory (CPT).
The strength and potentials of these effects will be revalued, visualized, and spatialized. Resilient strategies and prospects should be developed within the attendant transformation of rural space, towards a robust, dynamic, and adaptive planning process that shows the adaptation of such systems with regard to duration and magnitude.

Bavarian's East through the Looking Glass

Looking at Walter Christaller's model of the central places (▶2) and next to it at the *Landesentwickungsprogramm LEP* (▶3) it seems like the reading and understanding of the overall system has not changed substantially in the past decades in terms of planning methodology. The LEP

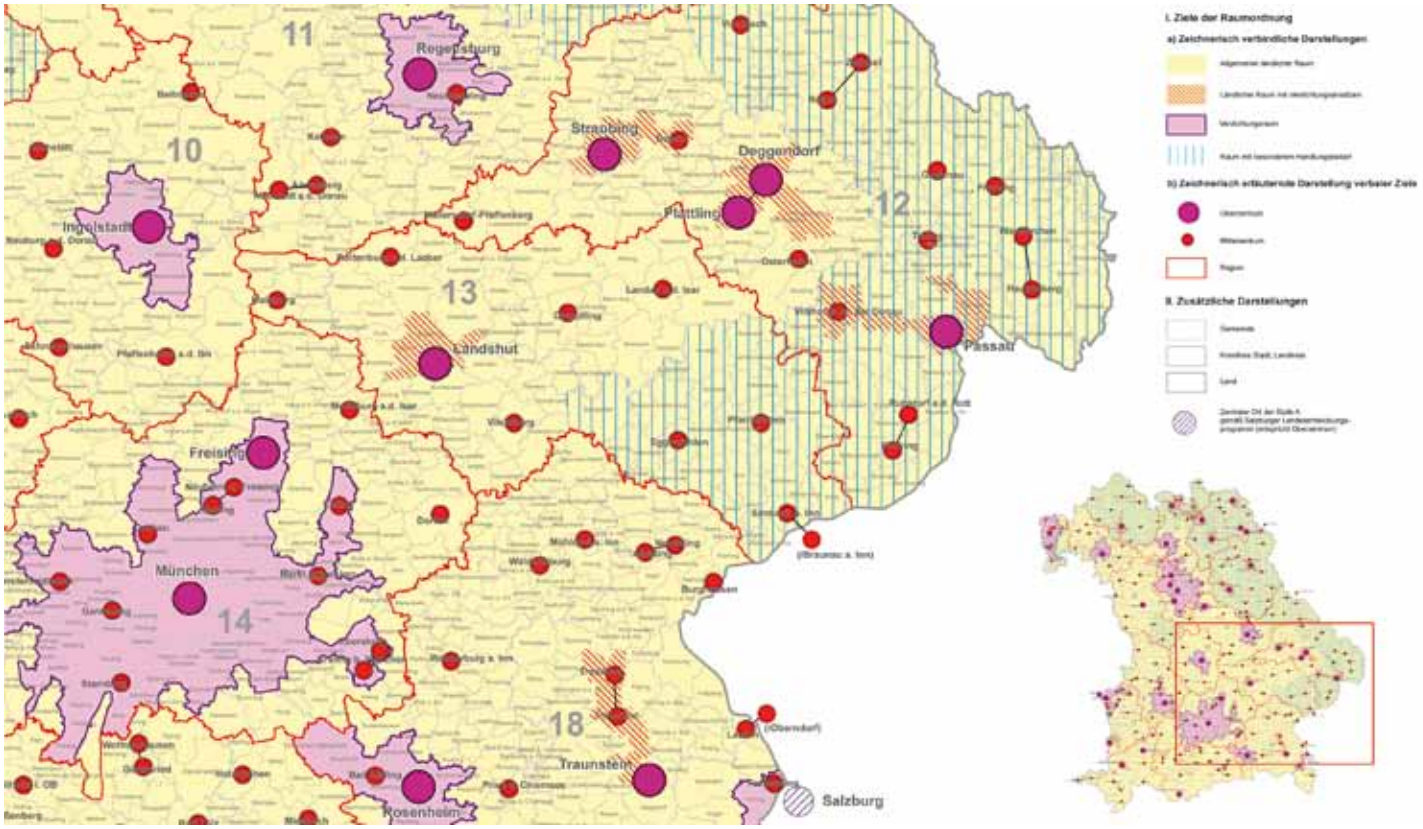


1
Counter poles—big and strong against small and weak. Poster (Team '70, Landtagswahl 1970, ACSP) with a partial view of the earth station in Raisting, a ground station of the German Federal Post Office to interact with telecommunication satellites, which were put into operation in 1964.

2
The internationally established concept of central places of Walter Christaller from 1933 provides a hierarchical organization of general interest in delimited subspaces (left) and schematic and geographical representation of centrality (right).

still adheres to a policy of developing nodes and centers, but what happens besides these elected points of interest? Furthermore, the regions are still not seen as coherent spaces, but instead simply thought of within political administrative borders.
It was one of the crucial points to take a closer look at and get a better understanding of what is going on between these nodes where the LEP provides almost no information. What does the situation look like in terms of equality between urban and rural areas and what is the current policy in terms of planning the hinterland?
A seminar titled "Wild Wild East," accompanied by a series of lectures, was the starting point to approach those processes by means of various "scenes and events" to get a better understanding of the spatial dispersions and relations of structures and effects. During the seminar,

3
Edited map of Landesentwicklungsprogramm Bayern, Strukturkarte, Anhang 2, Bayer. Staatsministerium, 2013



the eastern Bavarian region between Munich and Passau was examined more closely by a group of students in the winter term 2014/15. Structural measures and their significant inputs have become increasingly perceptible in that rural region. The map served as an empirical tool to locate, spatialize, and superimpose such strategies and developments and these coherent spatial structures were then shown in functional maps.

Jane Jacobs explained and discovered cities within the background of the most ordinary scenes and events. Having that in mind, we started the expedition into the hinterland. A further issue in the seminar was the representation of structural support measures with downstream effects and how they can be spatially displayed in the region.

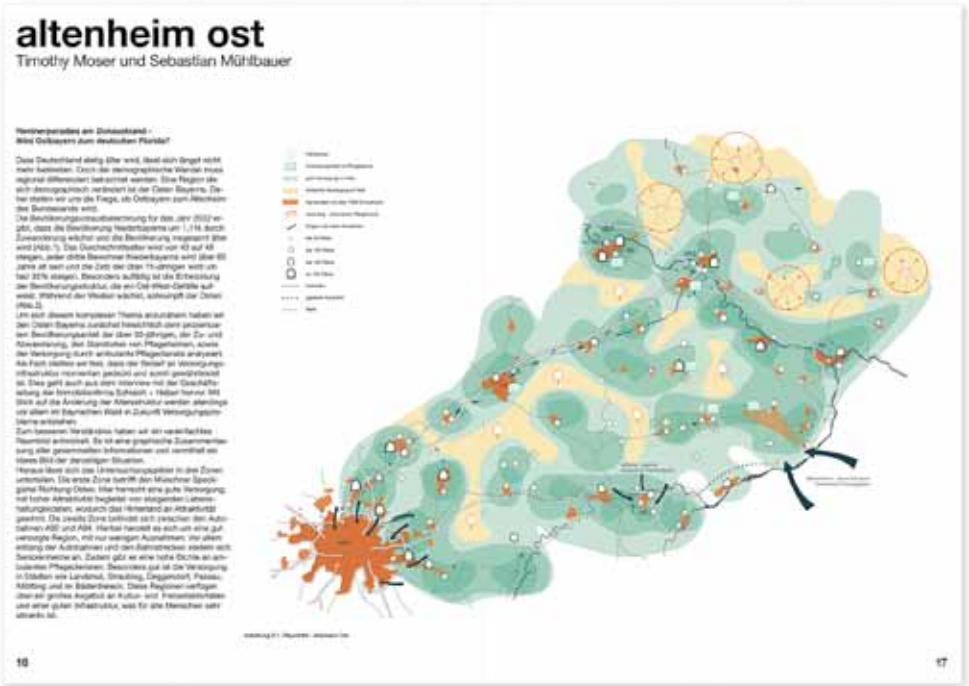
The seminar focused on topics of the productive potential of rural areas, implemented structural measures (infrastructure projects), demographic change and pension schemes, educational institutions and their structural decentralization of the knowledge economy towards a more and more professional industrial education (loss of a central educational mandate), the production of energy and its impact on landscape (wind turbines, biomass monocultures), the hinterland as compensation area (tourism and recreation), as well as the general settlement development.

The examination area for "Wild Wild East" in the southeast of Bavaria was particularly appropriate as an accumulation of structural measures of implemented infrastructures, urbanized corridor expansions, and escape strategies can be found in this area, and at the same time, the region functions more and more as a compensator for the metropolitan area of Munich. In a very short period of time, structural support measures have indirectly led to important production sites of global companies like BMW (Dingolfing, Landshut, Wallersdorf), Mann+Hummel (Marklkofen), Johnson Control (Neustadt/Donau), and Webasto (Schierling, Hengersberg) being situated here, as well as headquarter locations like Dräxlmaier (Vilsbiburg) and built recreation areas to escape the permanent pressure at the metropolis—here that means the rural areas benefit mostly from the economic point of view and lose respectively from changes to their spatial existence and function. In addition, many of the structural subsidies were introduced in the postwar period, however, the underlying structures and patterns are still clearly visible.

Based on a few illustrative models, some of these implemented structural measures can be represented in their historical origin and classification, spatial footprint, impacts, and resulting effects, and it can be seen how significantly they changed the rural area with rapid growth and transformation processes.

The study area is defined as being located eastwards of Munich and extends up to Passau, towards north Straubing/Gäuboden and in the south by the federal road B 304/Chiemgau. The region is developed in an east-west direction with the Highway A92 and A94 (former B12) and Eastern Bavaria Railway, and in a north-south direction through the several federal roads (B15, B20, B299). The Rottal extends centrally through the region, north of it are the rivers Vils and Isar, and in the south the river Inn (►**4**).

4
"Wild Wild East—Bavarian's east through the looking glass" (Seminar and lecture series, Winter term 2014/15)
Student project titled 'Altersheim Ost—Rentnerparadies am Donaustrand—Wird Ostbayern zum deutschen Florida?' ('Retirement home East—Senior citizens' paradise on the Danube strand—Is East Bavaria turning into a German Florida?')



Logic of Concentration—The Bavarian "Triangle of Chemistry"

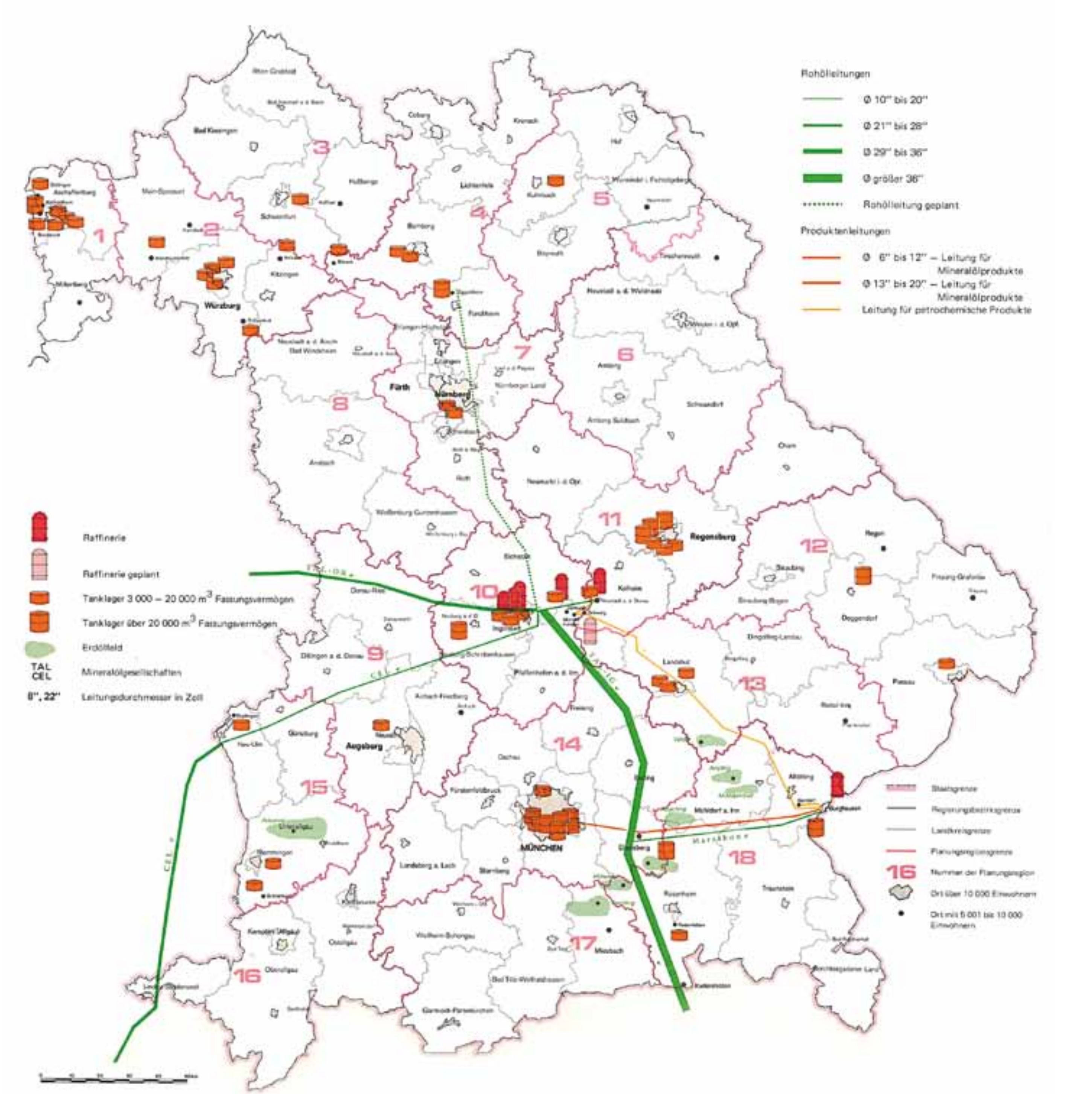
The first observation shows a development along the Austrian border with its main localities Burghausen, Gendorf, and Garching, known as the Bavarian "Triangle of Chemistry." Initially, a system for energy production was implemented here, but its origin mutated into a completely different industry during the decades. How these self-propelling constructs settled down and spread out over the whole region was hardly predictable. The development impulse was particularly based on inherent natural and topographical consistencies—precisely the geographic situation between the rivers Alz and Salzach. The construction of the Alz-Channel (built 1908–23) allowed efficient power generation with the first three hydroelectric power plants Trostberg, Tacherting, and Hirten. The energy was needed to convert calcium carbide into the fertilizer calcium cyanamide. At that time, it was more efficient to transport crude materials to the energy facility than vice versa.

In the middle of the nineteen-sixties, the petroleum industry became more important and most of the facilities and systems were modified. Accordingly, the area transformed from an energy provider for fertilizer production to one of the most important locations for the chemical industry. To ensure the supply of crude oil, an offshoot of TAL (Trans Alpine Crude Oil Supply) was put into operation in 1966. From then on, ethylene was extracted from crude oil—the basic product for any type of synthetic material, and even today the ethylene-network is steadily growing.

Behind the concentration of chemical plants are invisible networks that connect the hinterland with the chemical industry around Ingolstadt and Ludwigshafen on a national level and in addition a direct supply network to the airport and the city of Munich was created on a regional level. These invisible networks, on the one hand, cause a very visible infrastructure, for example, a high safety train path (Burghausen–Mühldorf) that transports hazardous materials close to the nearby settlements, along with an upgrade of the federal road B20 towards the north (▶**5, 6**).

Logic of Deconcentration—Corridor Development and the Second Row of the Automotive Cluster and Supplying Industry

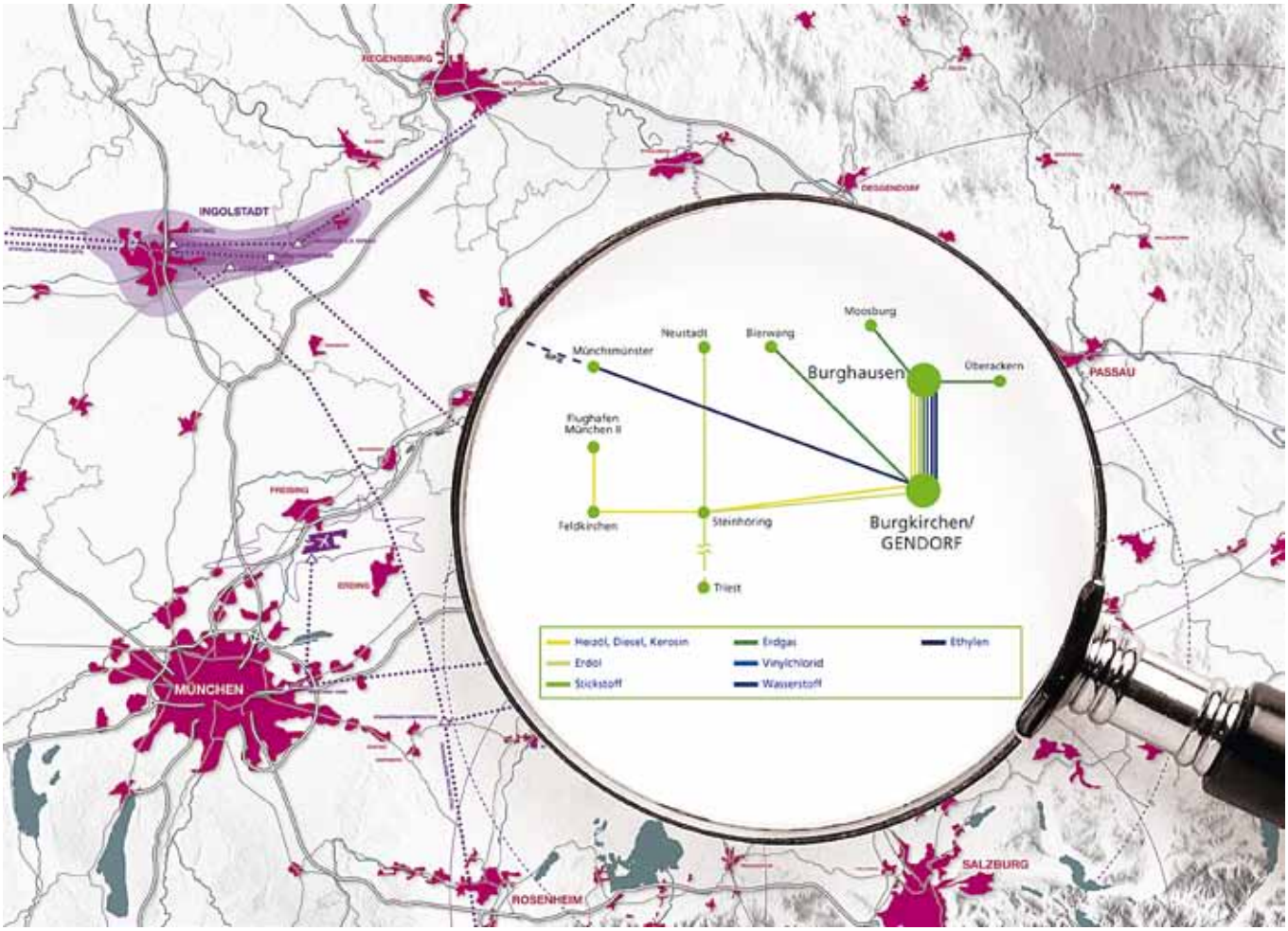
Compared with the concentrated development that was shown in the case above, a very different origin was observed along the Isar Delta. Next to the existing railway, the new highway A92 was implemented to promote the whole corridor between Munich and Deggendorf. The highway was one of the largest and fastest built infrastructure projects in that region when it was established in the nineteen-sixties for a better connection of the hinterland towards the Bavarian Forest and the eastern mid-European countries like the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary. About forty years ago, the state government opened up the structurally weak region of Lower Bavaria, which was almost completely limited to agriculture at that time. With this highway and railway backbone, a lot of large developments came along. Thus, the structure for the establishment of global companies

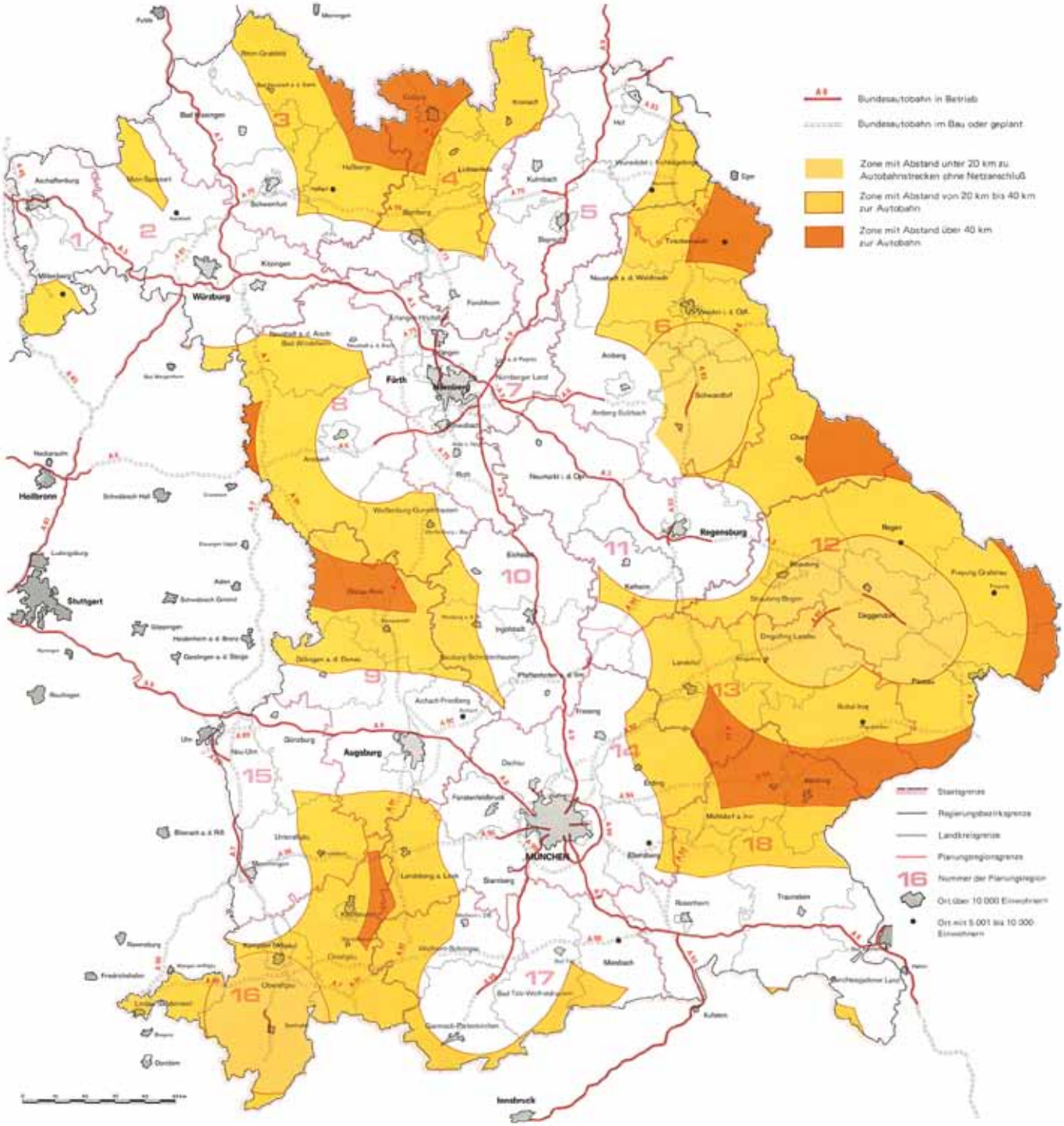


Rohölleitungen
Ø 10" bis 20"
Ø 21" bis 28"
Ø 29" bis 36"
Ø größer 36"
Rohölleitung geplant
Produktenleitungen
Ø 6" bis 12" – Leitung für Mineralölprodukte
Ø 13" bis 20" – Leitung für Mineralölprodukte
Leitung für petrochemische Produkte
Raffinerie
Raffinerie geplant
Tanklager 3 000 – 20 000 m³ Fassungsvermögen
Tanklager über 20 000 m³ Fassungsvermögen
Erdölfeld
TAL
CEL
Mineralölgesellschaften
8", 22"
Leitungsdurchmesser in Zoll
Würzburg
Fürth
Regensburg
Augsburg
MÜNCHEN

5
System-modification to petro chemistry (crude oil supply)
CEL-Pipeline / 2. Crude-Oil-Pipeline / Genoa-Ingolstadt, Karlsruhe (1966) / TAL-Pipeline / 3. Crude-Oil-Pipeline / Trieste-Ingolstadt, Karlsruhe (1967) / Ethylene-Pipeline / Münchsmünster-Gendorf (1971/72) / Suspension and Modification to Gas Pipeline (1997)

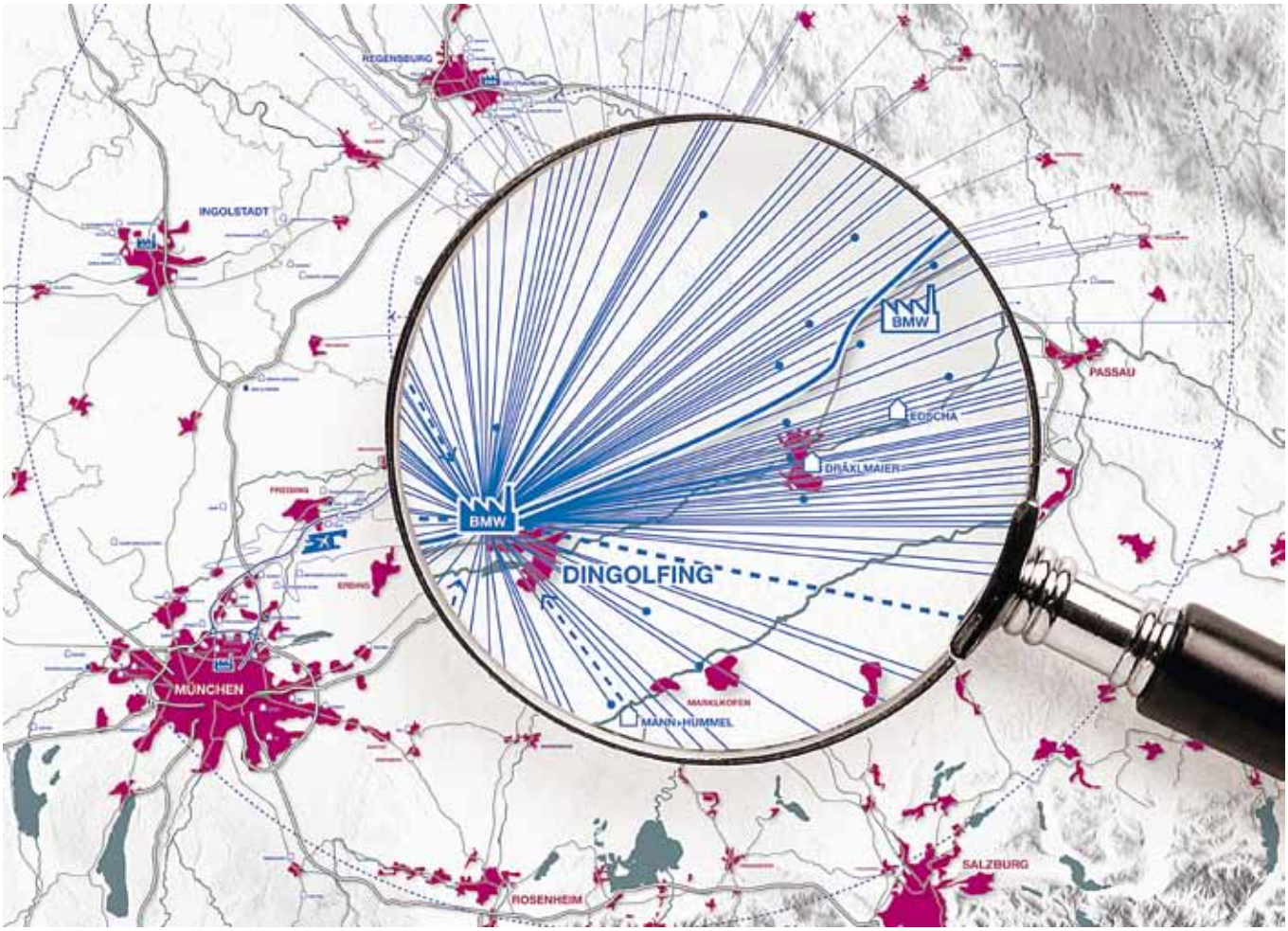
6
Spatial footprint and hidden network of the Bavarian "Triangle of Chemistry"




Bundesautobahn in Betrieb
Bundesautobahn im Bau oder geplant
Zone mit Abstand unter 20 km zu Autobahnstrecken ohne Netzanschluß
Zone mit Abstand von 20 km bis 40 km zur Autobahn
Zone mit Abstand über 40 km zur Autobahn
Würzburg
Fürth
Nürnberg
Heilbronn
Stuttgart
Regensburg
Augsburg
MÜNCHEN
Innsbruck
Staatsgrenze
Regierungsbezirksgrenze
Landkreisgrenze
Planungsregionsgrenze
16 Nummer der Planungsregion
Ort über 10 000 Einwohnern
Ort mit 5 001 bis 10 000 Einwohnern

7
Regions with missing connections through highways, 1975

8
Development along the Isar Delta / Autobahn A92, BMW-Route, Munich-Deggendorf



and industrial centers in that rural area was created and clusters like the Munich international airport, nuclear and hydroelectric power plants (OHU), and probably the most dominant and influential development of that respect was the automotive industry with their main factories (BMW) in Dingolfing and Landshut.
Having a closer look at the automotive cluster, a network of buses collects masses of employees within a one-hundred-kilometer radius to serve the needs of that huge production facility each day. These buses cover a daily distance of more than 43,000 kilometers and staff only the Dingolfing factory with approximately 18,500 shift workers. For these workers, originally skilled craftsmen or farmers, the higher wages of these companies are more attractive than working in their former concessions. This causes a lack of skilled laborers with the result that original midsize and traditional companies and craft industries (e.g. carpenter, locksmith, etc.) gradually disappear. In opposition to this trend of vanishing companies, the settlement of secondary suppliers appears left and right of these corridors in particular within the area northwest of Munich, between Ingolstadt (AUDI), Regensburg / Neutraubling (BMW) and Dingolfing (BMW). Smaller industries, with some hidden champions, but also some global companies based themselves along the federal roads as the secondary serving infrastructures to supply the big players along the corridor from within a delivery distance of around 120 minutes (▶**7, 8**).

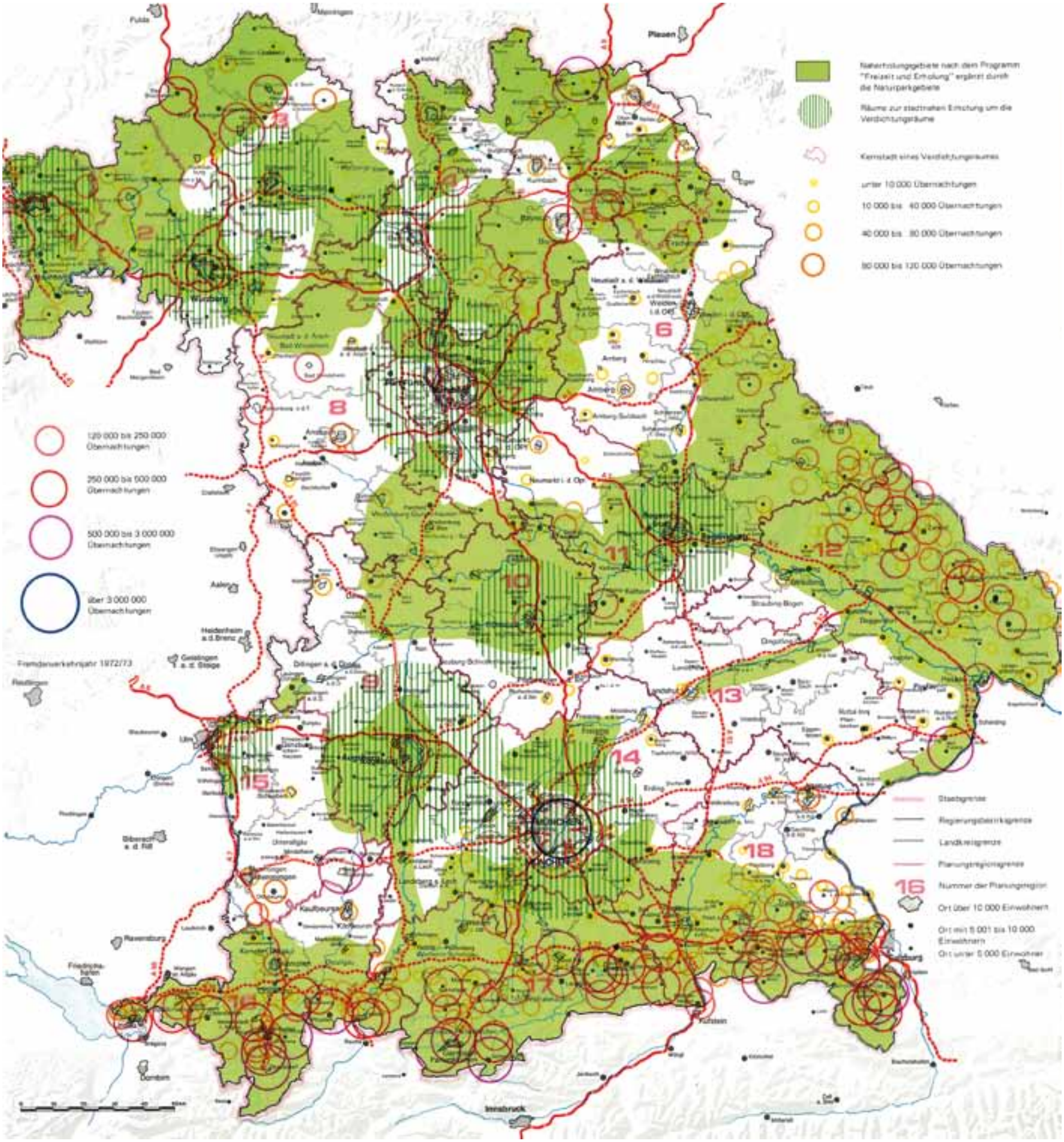
Built Illusions—Monotony and Tourism Development "Rottaler Bäderdreieck"

The "Rottaler Bäderdreieck" (Rottaler spa triangle) stretches across Bad Birnbach, Bad Griesbach, and Bad Füssing, and is more a product of coincidence than structurally planned. Currently, it is dominated by golf, spa, and health tourism and serves as an extended recreation area for Greater Munich.
In the late nineteen-thirties, a military soil researcher was sent out to search for oilfields all over the country. Around the area of Füssing and Birnbach, geothermal springs were found instead of crude material. Compared to the successful West Bohemian Spa Triangle located nearby—Carlsbad (Karlovy Vary), Franzensbad (Františkovy Lázně), and Marienbad (Mariánské Lázně)—an eastern Bavaria thermal bath resort seemed not very plausible and the decision was made not to make use of the resources of up to sixty-degree Celsius warm water for the moment. At the end of the nineteen-sixties, the healing power of the hot springs came back into vogue and so did the potential for a structural measure in that area. Together with Bad Griesbach, Bad Füssing, and Bad Birnbach, the Spa Triangle was completed. In addition to that, Bad Füssing got one of the very rare casino licenses, which increased overnight stays in the region as well. Locating the planned Highway A94 through that region to further promote the region could not be realized. At the end of the nineteen-eighties, health insurance providers almost completely dropped their funding of cure-treatments for health resorts, with the result that the construction of the Rottaler thermal

bath mutated over the past decade into one of the largest golf and spa resorts in Europe.
The accompanying change of landscape led towards uniform monocultures. Nowadays, the region represents a nonfunctional swathe of land dominated by English golf lawns in addition to cornfields for biomass production. Since the emergence of the spa triangle, the spatial dissection weakens the region as a holistic structure, based on its three main poles. The individual interests of moguls and landlords supersede a thoughtful sustainable planning and essentially define the transformation in that region. It goes from one extreme to another and it is almost impossible to predict what will take place next and which contingencies will encourage the golf and health resort development and return the focus to tourism (▶9, 10).

Challenge and Conclusion

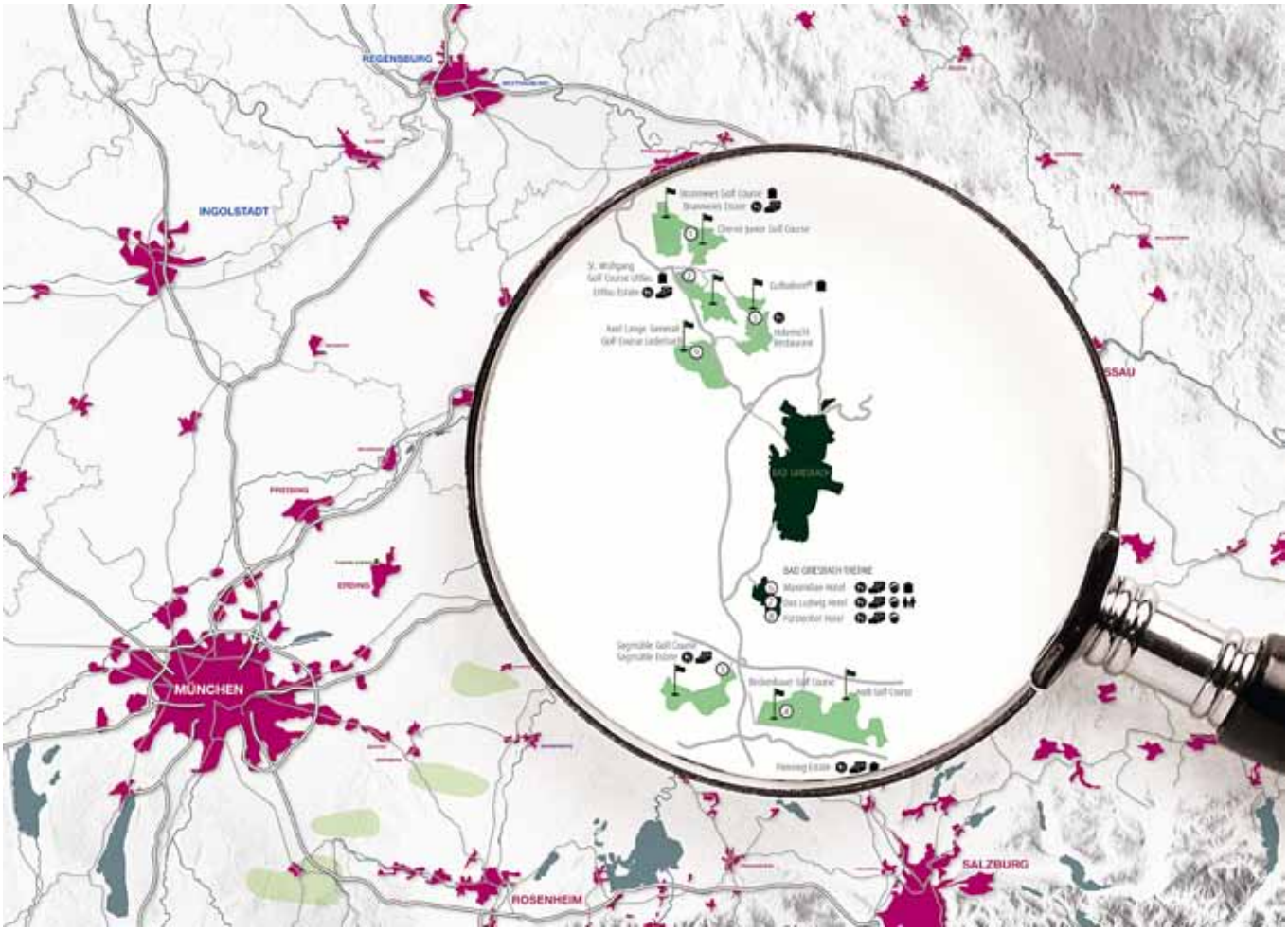
Based on the above examples, across the eastern part of Bavaria it can be concluded that it is important to investigate and understand these above-described "Landungsprozesse" within their origin, development, dependencies, and downstream effects. In terms of spatial and regional planning, these perceptions lead to a better understanding of regions that are currently under an extremely high development pressure, as well as for underdeveloped regions that are the focus of upcoming structural measures.
The causal dependence of spatial and functional relationships between city and hinterland are hardly taken into consideration and adjacent subspaces often compete with each other. In the sense of equal opportunities and spatial planning, a protective and balanced function is missing. Spatial planning and regional development entities have to rethink and design these subspaces and accept a certain amount of inequalities, rather than showing overall structural support measures to be equivalent. The variety and robust structure of rural areas have to be guaranteed and major companies and moguls must not exploit rural areas for purely economic interests by producing fundamental changes.
A characteristic diversity of subspaces with fair living conditions and the promotion of social, economic, and cultural life in rural areas has to be created. It is not about the overall supervision of an abstract system, but is instead about the identification and design of its individual regions and an objective and spatially fair distribution of development opportunities and risks among cities, towns, and rural areas.
It is not sufficient to discipline spatial planning, policies have to set more substantive responses and counterpoints to short-term trends. It is about eyeing a constantly adaptive appropriation of the whole region, to ensure its sustainable productivity and viability. The focus is on maintaining and creating an intelligent and sustainable basis on which existing and new spatial structures and self-sustaining productive mechanisms can be developed to stay flexible and adaptable in their particular context (▶11, 12, 13).



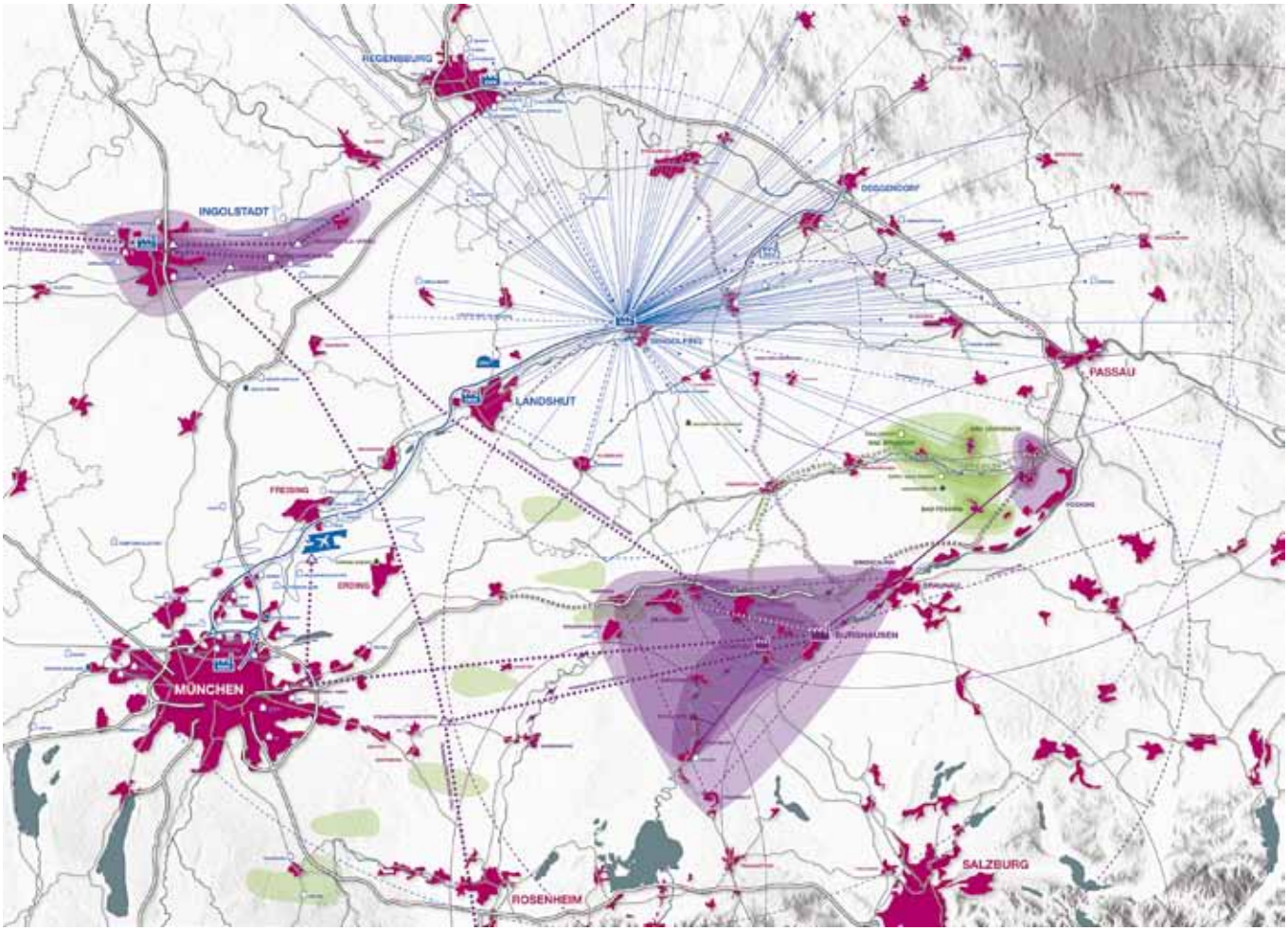
Plauen
Würzburg
Aalen
Heidenheim a.d.Brenz
Ulm
Biberach a. d. Riß
Kaufbeuren
Ravensburg
Dornbirn
Innsbruck
Kufstein
Amberg
2
6
8
10
11
12
13
14
15
17
18
Naherholungsgebiete nach dem Programm "Freizeit und Erholung" ergänzt durch die Naturparkgebiete
Räume zur stadtnahen Erholung um die Verdichtungsräume
Kernstadt eines Verdichtungsraumes
unter 10 000 Übernachtungen
10 000 bis 40 000 Übernachtungen
40 000 bis 80 000 Übernachtungen
80 000 bis 120 000 Übernachtungen
120 000 bis 250 000 Übernachtungen
250 000 bis 500 000 Übernachtungen
500 000 bis 3 000 000 Übernachtungen
über 3 000 000 Übernachtungen
Fremdenverkehrsjahr 1972/73
Staatsgrenze
Regierungsbezirksgrenze
Landkreisgrenze
Planungsregionsgrenze
16
Nummer der Planungsregion
Ort über 10 000 Einwohnern
Ort mit 5 001 bis 10 000 Einwohnern
Ort unter 5 000 Einwohner

9
Development of recreation areas overlaid with overnight stays in tourism municipalities Bad Füssing: 500,000 to 3,000,000 overnight stays (1972/73)

10
Recreation and spa in Lower Bavaria / Tourism, Golf and Health Resort at Bäderdreieck Rottal/Inn



11
Overview "Landungs-prozesse" / Bavarian "Triangle of Chemistry," Corridor A92 with supplying industry and Golf and Health Resort Rottal/Inn



12
Golf Resort Rottal/Inn,
Bad Birnbach

13
Refinery, the Bavarian
"Triangle of Chemistry,"
Burghausen

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Social Innovations in Rural Life Worlds

Ralph Richter

This article presents preliminary results of a research project that a group of scientists is currently conducting at the Leibniz-Institute for Research on Society and Space (IRS) in Erkner/Germany.[1] Researching "Innovations in Rural Communities," we investigate under which conditions social innovations come into being in rural communities. An important catalyst for the project was the irritating observation that negative discourses dominate the public and scientific debates about the countryside. Rural regions are characterized by population loss and aging, by economic downturn, and by the deficient provision of public goods like health care and public transport. The predominant image of rural regions contains attributes like conservatism and backwardness rather than characteristics like innovation or open-mindedness. Of course, these are stereotypical ascriptions. As in cities, in the countryside innovations and inventions come into being every day. People in villages and small towns constantly search for new ways to deal with societal challenges. Despite this, social innovations in rural regions remain underrepresented, be it in public discourses or in research (Coronado, Acosta, and Fernandez 2008; Dannenberg, Lang, and Lehmann 2010; and Neumeier 2012). Against this backdrop, our research group has developed a project that investigates the generation and diffusion of innovative ideas in rural regions, that identifies supportive and obstructive conditions for their establishment, and that explores how they shape everyday practices. The overall research question is: under which preconditions, in which processes, and with what effects do people and organizations strive to establish social innovations in rural communities?

Theoretical Background

In a broader sense, our research is based on the concept of communicative constructivism (Knoblauch 2001a; Keller, Knoblauch, and Reichertz 2013; and Christmann 2016). Following this, we focus on how regions and places are socially constructed as well as on how space-related patterns of knowledge and beliefs direct communicative and other forms of action on site. Manifestations of communicative action (observed behavior, newspaper articles, recorded interviews, etc.) provide empirical access for analyzing phenomenon like region-related innovation processes. Furthermore, our research refers to social innovation theories as they are conceptualized by scientists like Jürgen Howaldt and Michael Schwarz (2010), Werner Rammert (2010) and Frank Moulaert (2005; 2013). Social innovation then means "an intentional reconfiguration of social practices in specific fields of action or social contexts by certain actors with the objective of finding better solutions to challenges or needs than it would be possible on the basis of established practices" (Howaldt and Schwarz 2010, 89, own translation). Unlike in the case of technological or economic innovations, social innovations primarily refer to the conditions and consequences that innovations have in a community or society. As long as innovative projects and practices are limited to their creators or a small group of people, we would not speak of a social innovation. Only if people in a given social environment adopt the idea and if the innovation changes practices in the respective community we can speak of "social" innovations.

Methodology and Case Selection

From these theoretical foundations follow a number of criteria that drove the selection of innovative cases. First, we looked for projects that address societal challenges in rural regions like weak social cohesion or scarcities in the provision of public goods. The second criterion is the existence of semantics of innovation. Project managers or stakeholders must describe the respective project as new or different to existing practices. The background for this decision is that we wanted to avoid determining from a researcher's view what is new and innovative. Instead, we adopted the perspective of the observed people regarding what they perceive as different and more promising than existing solutions. Thirdly, the chosen project had to be located in rural and remote regions. For the latter, we applied the regional typology of the German Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs, and Spatial Development (BBSR) that distinguishes regions in Germany according to their settlement structure and the degree of centrality. All selected projects are located in sparsely settled and peripheral regions. According to these criteria, we chose six innovative projects:

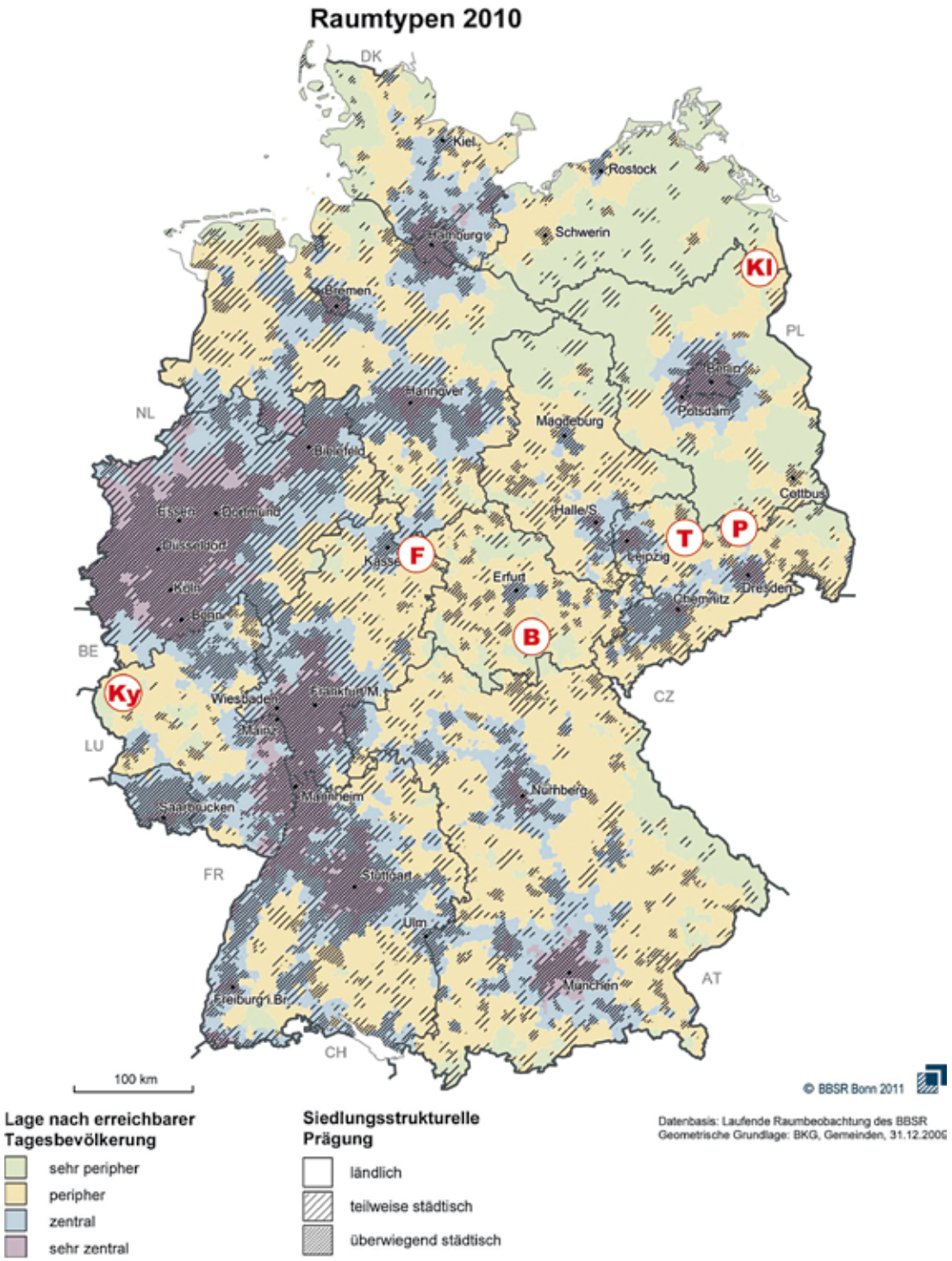
- Local supply Frankershausen (*Nahversorgung Frankershausen*) is a community center project in the community of Frankershausen (federal state of Hesse) with about 1,600 inhabitants. The community center strives to ensure the provision of convenience goods and to integrate handicapped people by employing them.

- "Klockow—Life-Energy for the Village" (*Lebens-Energie für das Dorf*) is an initiative in the remote region of Uckermark (federal state of Brandenburg) that strives to strengthen social cohesion by the training of so-called village caretakers *(Dorf-kümmerer)*.
- The project "Art-Culture-Kyllburg" (*Kunst–Kultur–Kyllburg*) organizes art events at vacant shops in the small town of Kyllburg. The 900-person-town Kyllburg is located in the remote Eifel region (federal state of Rhineland-Palatinate).
- "Storytelling salon Plessa" (*Erzählsalon Plessa*) is a project that organizes storytelling round tables in order to strengthen community cohesion and active citizenship. The community of Plessa is located in the Lusatia region (federal state of Brandenburg) and has about 2,700 residents.
- The citizens' initiative "Bioenergy village Bechstedt" (*Bioenergiedorf Bechstedt*) built up facilities for the production of renewable energy and shifted from the supply of conventional energy to self-produced renewable energy. Bechstedt is a village in the Thuringian Forest (federal state of Thuringia) with about 155 inhabitants.
- "Clear matter Treptitz" (*Klare Sache Treptitz*) is a community initiative that built an ecological waste-water system and district heating grid in the village of Treptitz in order to protect water pollution as well as to save energy and money. The 140-person-village is located in the federal state of Saxony (▶**1**).

Methodologically, we combine a mixed-methods with a longitudinal research design. We collect qualitative as well as quantitative data during several field trips, thereby following the principles of focused ethnography (Knoblauch 2001, 2005). Instead of observing social practices in a long-term field research as proposed in classic ethnography, focused ethnography directs the attention to communicative action that can be observed at key events (i.e. public meetings) by means of several shorter field trips. The research project began in January 2015 and will last until the end of 2018. This four-year period of investigation allows us to observe the dynamics of innovation processes.

1
Location of the six case studies, selected according to the BBSR Regional Typology: Kl (Klockow—Life-Energy for the Village, T ("Clear matter Treptitz"), P ("Storytelling salon Plessa"), F ("Village shop Frankershausen"), B ("Bioenergy village Bechstedt"), Ky ("Art-Culture-Kyllburg")

Legend: Location according to the accessibility of population: very peripheral (green), peripheral (yellow), central (blue), very central (violet) Predominant settlement structure: rural (untextured), partly urban (large stripes), predominantly urban (dense stripes)


Raumtypen 2010
DK
Kiel
Rostock
Hamburg
Schwerin
KI
Bremen
PL
Berlin
Hannover
Potsdam
NL
Magdeburg
Bielefeld
Cottbus
Essen
Dortmund
Halle/S.
T
P
Düsseldorf
F
Kassel
Leipzig
Erfurt
Köln
Dresden
Chemnitz
Bonn
B
BE
Ky
Wiesbaden
Frankfurt/M.
CZ
Mainz
LU
Nürnberg
Mannheim
Saarbrücken
FR
Stuttgart
Ulm
AT
München
Freiburg i.Br.
CH
100 km
© BBSR Bonn 2011
Lage nach erreichbarer Tagesbevölkerung
sehr peripher
peripher
zentral
sehr zentral
Siedlungsstrukturelle Prägung
ländlich
teilweise städtisch
überwiegend städtisch
Datenbasis: Laufende Raumbeobachtung des BBSR
Geometrische Grundlage: BKG, Gemeinden, 31.12.2009

Social Innovations between the Local and the Global

Which insights did we gain so far? Taken the early phase of our long-term investigation and the fact that we just began with analyzing interview material, participant observation protocols, and media coverage, this article can only present preliminary results.

An interesting observation is that in no case the innovation project ideationally, socially, or geographically is limited to the village and its surroundings. Whereas our focus is on projects that take place in villages or small towns, ideas, contacts, and resources that interlink the observed place with other regions and cities drive the innovation process. Actors not only strive to convince people of the innovative aspects of the project in the local context but also organize support in regional and supra-regional media as well as in regional and supra-regional decision-making bodies. I will explain this by means of our case study "Clear matter Treptitz."

At the beginning of the project, a new EU water framework directive (European Parliament 2000) was published that raised the standard for wastewater treatment. The people of Treptitz felt compelled to build new wastewater treatment plants for every single household. This was an expensive and unsustainable undertaking. But the people of Treptitz were fortunate to have a resident with knowledge about the subject as well as with the ability to convince people of an idea (Hoffmann 2011). This key actor acquired his know-how about wastewater treatment from his studies and a subsequent occupation at a Technical College in the city of Leipzig. He developed the idea of building cost-saving group wastewater plants and a local wastewater canal system instead of a number of household plants. The key actor convinced the local people of the plan and founded an association for the ecological protection of water (Keilholz 2013). However, the district council, that represents Treptitz and eleven other villages, refused to give permission to the plan. Only after a legal procedure and with the help of the federal states' Ministry of the Environment and Agriculture, which gave the project the status of a pilot project, the permission of the district council was granted (Pabst 2014). In 2011 and 2012, the people of Treptitz realized the project by means of financial contributions and collective physical work. Other community projects followed, such as a village heating system and a humification plant (Hörügel 2014). As a side effect, the social cohesion in the village improved and young families settled down and built houses (Sahlbach 2014, 40). This makes Treptitz an exception within a region that is faced with out-migration and aging of the population.

The case of Treptitz demonstrates that social innovations arise if people and groups find new solutions (group wastewater plants) to societal challenges (raised wastewater treatment standards). It exposes how the generation and the implementation of the innovation project not only depends on the cooperation of local people but also on making use of external ideas and on contacts with regional and supra-regional institutions. The education of the key person in the city of Leipzig was a precondition for the technical know-how necessary for the realization of the project. Obtaining support

from the federal Ministry paved the way to overcome obstacles formed by the district council. In this way, Treptitz provides an example of the deterritorialization of rural life worlds.

The second observation refers to how innovative actors or groups proceed to convince people on site of the idea of a project and of participation. By no means is this self-evident since innovative practices mean deviating from the familiar, which in turn means insecurity. We observe that convincing people in the countryside of innovation projects requires directly contacting them to explain intentions and benefits. Repeatedly, our interview partners state that people may appear to be reserved and distanced at the beginning, but open up if one makes an effort to explain the idea. This becomes evident in the statement of an interview partner in the village of Plessa: "If you address a meaningful and reasonable request, you will catch them. … However, they want to be asked. You must communicate what it is all about." (Interview with a resident of Plessa, 10.08.2015a)

This statement refers to the observed innovation project *Erzählsalon* that a project group from Berlin is going to establish in the village of Plessa. At the same time, it must be read against the experiences that the people of Plessa had with former project managers from the capital city. Following our interview partners, project managers from Berlin repeatedly failed to put themselves in the position of local people and to address them:

"People from Berlin believe they had found the egg of Columbus, that is to say 'I am right,' 'I know everything,' However, you cannot transfer Berlin to the province. People from Berlin are said to be show-offs. If they proceed to achieve something, that's ok. But they have this reputation, and people don't like that.... You cannot come and tell the people 'you are stupid' and 'I am the only one who has a clue' and 'I will tell you what's going on in the future or how you have to handle it.' That's the wrong approach."

(Interview with a resident of Plessa, 10.08.2015b)

The people of Plessa feel stigmatized by an ostentatiously demonstrated big-city view. They seem to recognize an almost colonial experience, something that Thomas et al. (2011) call "urbanormativity"—the perceived marginalization of rural regions. External project managers repeatedly give people in rural regions the impression to have better solutions to occurring problems due to their urban background and related normative thinking.

Often enough, this strategy fails and makes them look like show-offs. It seems that until today, rural life is characterized by specific patterns of meanings, beliefs, and normative expectations. Even though supra-regional thinking and collaborations are essential preconditions for the generation of innovative ideas, innovations follow no standardized formula that can be implemented arbitrarily in one region and another. The transformation of innovations to social innovations makes them region sensitive.

Conclusion

The presented findings are preliminary in the sense that they still rest upon a limited set of empirical data and analysis. First, we find that rural innovations are based on both the local integration of the key actor(s) and access to supra-local resources. The next task of the research project will be to check and refine this result in the light of the other case studies. The same applies to the second preliminary result: evidence that rural regions possess specific patterns of meanings, beliefs, and normative orders that have an impact on the establishment of social innovations. Further research must identify innovation-related rural characteristics in more detail and describe their effect as supportive or obstructive factors. Finally, the question arises as to how far rural communities show similarities and differences in dealing with innovative solutions to social problems.

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Note

1 I wish to thank Gabriela B. Christmann, head of the research group and of the IRS Department "Dynamics of Communication, Knowledge and Spatial Development" as well as the other group members Tobias Federwisch, Laura Stähler, Thorsten Heimann, Anika Noack, and Thomas Honeck for their valuable comments and advice.

The Interrelation of Architecture and Territorial Character in Northern Germany

Ines Lüder

This paper discusses the actual status of architecture, as well as challenges and potentials for the discipline in the territory on the basis of case studies in rural areas in Northern Germany. It will clarify the understanding of territory as an extensive basis and matrix in which architecture is embedded and to which it is related (Schröder et al. 2010). Territory in this sense is constituted by the distinction of an outside and by the specific and manifold relations between its elements—including the natural conditions, the human artifacts, as well as the actors and their designations.

For rural areas of Switzerland, the emergence of an urban culture that is determined by differences rather than by a distinctive character has been described, which is possibly true for village cultures in former times (Diener et al. 2005, 173). Furthermore, the presence of differences implies "an unexpected and multilayered urban dynamic" (Ibid., 116). Similar conditions were observed in Northern Germany as will be pointed out in the following text. The areas of examination, formerly classified as rural in the sense that they were sparsely populated and agrarian-orientated, are undergoing fundamental changes and developing into complex, ambiguous, and indeterminate rural-urban territories. The territorial character is undergoing a rapid transformation along with the process of urbanization and globalization. Simultaneously, the regional identity as expressed and sustained through a characteristic cultural landscape comes under scrutiny again as a possibly advantageous site in terms of competitiveness for both people and money (BMVBS/BBR 2006). These processes generate new questions for the field of architecture and settlement

development (BMVBS 2013). Architecture is a relevant component of the cultural landscape in urban and rural areas. This is true for single objects, but also for the large-scale context and impact of architecture in the territory as will be emphasized in the following sections. This paper addresses the question of how architecture can contribute to establishing a sense of place, to create regional identity and character, and by doing so add to a sustainable development of livable territories (BMVBS 2006; BfN 2010).

Historical and contemporary spatial manifestations will be described from the findings gained from the analysis of the community of Dornum, located in East Frisia on the North Sea, by using a method which analyzes the built elements of a territory within a contextual system of relations. The case study elements will be evaluated regarding their capability for the development of the cultural landscape and regarding their consequences for architectural practice and the establishment of a regional building culture.

Differences and the Cultural Landscape

The following description of the case study of Dornum will show how the built environment changes along with the manifold needs and actors, along with changes in the economy, culture, and also craftsmanship and building techniques. Apart from natural elements—which are to a great extent cultivated by humans—built elements are relevant parts of a cultural landscape: they can be buildings of different functions and materials; they can be infrastructure elements or settlement structures; they can be historic, contemporary, or prospective; they can be characteristic or generic; they have various manifestations, potentials, and challenges.

In the course of industrialization and globalization there is the tendency for landscapes—as visual and spatial manifestations of territories—to become more complex and hybrid, but also more generic. While gaining new elements, places and landscapes lose coherence, atmosphere, and specificity. Contemporary built elements often lack qualitative relations to the territory and spatial quality. Fast traffic routes, energy infrastructures, catalog houses, logistic boxes, and largescale buildings for livestock are most explicit examples of this infiltration in formerly rural areas (Brenner and Schmid 2015, 151–182; Augé 2010; Arch+ 2012; Pretterhofer 2010). These elements are influenced by global principles and depict contemporary economic and social developments as well as added value. They have an impact on the landscape in a visual and structural sense—as an overlay, rather than as a coherent advancement of the existing character.

Thinking about the future development of Northern German territories and their inherent cultural landscapes, a prospective urban productivity which is linked to existing and forthcoming differences can be fruitful for a process of building up common values, visions, aims, and projects. Since a qualitative and resilient territorial character does not develop on its own, this approach fosters an understanding that the cultural landscape is literally being built by the people and their responsible decisions. Cultural landscapes should not be understood as scenery, but as productive and lively

environments, and as a designed and appropriated place with societal and cultural values embedded and with architecture as a relevant component. The cultural landscape is frame for its inhabitant's way of life, their values, and visions. With all its vagueness and complexity, the cultural landscape is nothing that can be planned as a whole, but it is continuously evolving. It is, seen from an optimistic and democratic point of view, generated by the whole society with its individual actors. The overlay and complexity of the many elements create differences but also possibilities. A characteristic cultural landscape cannot continue its existence based alone on the historical building stock and settlement structure, but also not without it. The contemporary layer to this territorial palimpsest (Corboz 2001, 143–166) should enhance the specific character. The process of transformation connects history and future and reshapes the relationship of man in the territory.

Patterns in the Territory

A method to understand and evaluate in a substantial way built elements in the territory is their analysis as patterns.[1] References for this approach are Christopher Alexander´s *A Pattern Language* (Alexander et al. 1977) and *The Timeless Way of Building* (Alexander 1979). In Alexander´s argument, elements, like buildings, are dissolved in favor of patterns of relations. The overall goal is to establish a built environment in which people "feel alive and human" (Alexander et al. 1977, xvii). In *A Pattern Language*, a catalogue of 253 building elements of different scales is presented, starting with the region and finishing with the personal belongings which get their place inside a house. Demands for every element are formulated in order to best fulfill its function. The elements are described as patterns, meaning that the solution offered for solving a certain problem of the built and inhabited environment can be used many times without "ever doing it the same way twice" (Ibid., x). Additionally, to form the structure of the language, the relation to greater and smaller elements are described:

"In short, no pattern is an isolated entity. Each pattern can exist in the world, only to the extent that is supported by other patterns: the larger patterns in which it is embedded, the patterns of the same size that surround it, and the smaller patterns which are embedded in it.
This is a fundamental view of the world. It says that when you build a thing you cannot merely build that thing in isolation, but must also repair the world around it, and within it, so that the larger world at that one place becomes more coherent,

and more whole; and the thing which you make takes its place in the web of nature, as you make it."
(Alexander et al. 1977, xiii)

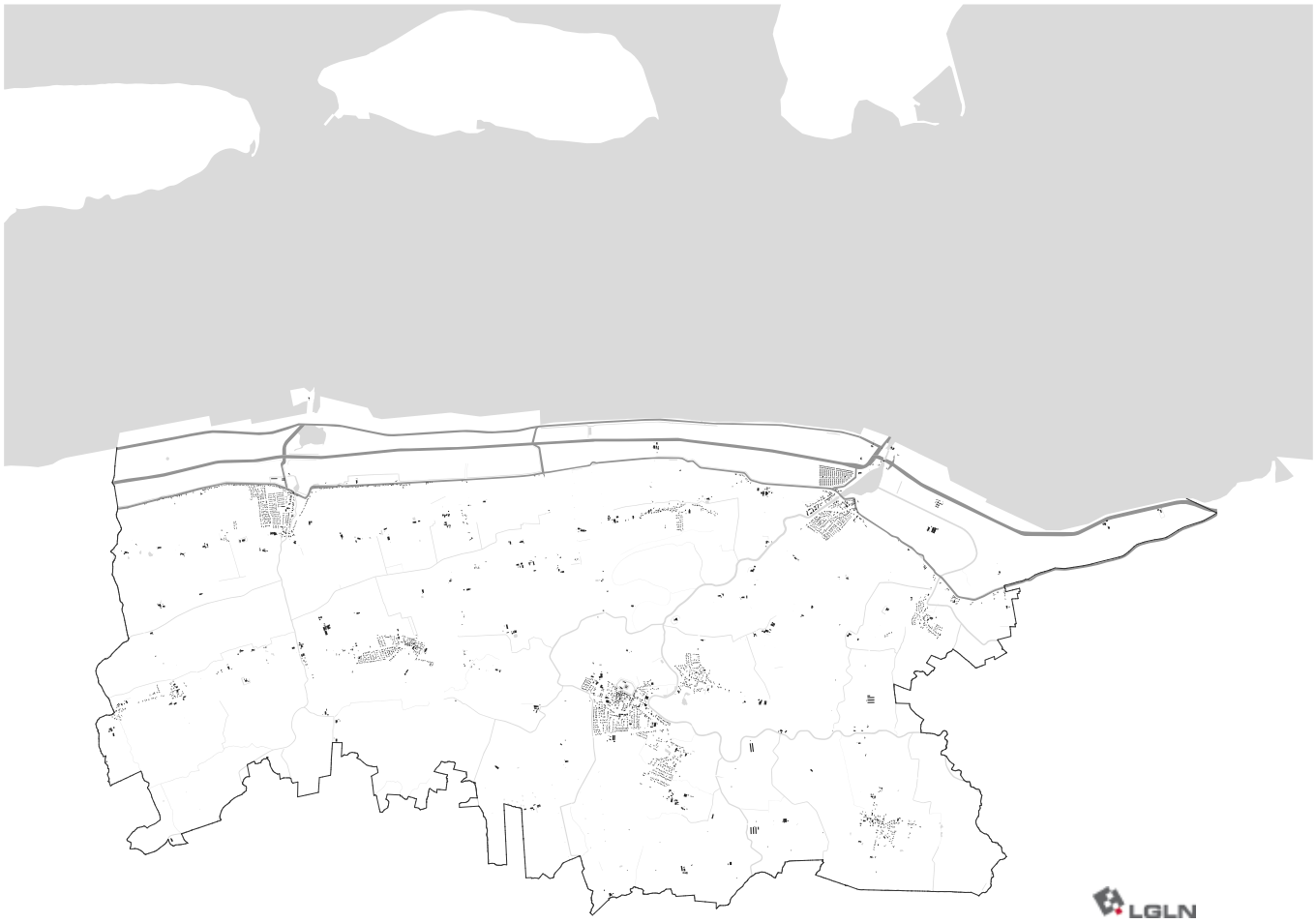
For Alexander, a building gets its character from recurrent patterns of events, which are linked to patterns of space to form an entity:

"The total pattern, space and events together, is an element of people´s culture. It is invented by culture, transmitted by culture, and merely anchored in space."
(Alexander 1979, 92)

1
Christmas flood 1717

With the concept of patterns as a relational system, the spatial complexity and characteristics of relevant built elements are being depicted and evaluated with regard to their intrinsic possibilities. In contrast to focusing on single built objects, this approach includes an analysis of the contextual correlations: physical, functional, and ideational connections and also decompositions in the territory. It implies an emphasis on the relation to natural elements and spaces as well as the consideration of various scales—reaching from material and the building to the settlement structures and regional networks—and of the users and their perception and valuation. With this approach, thematic layers, boundaries, and discrepancies are being identified, providing hints for constraints, potentials, and future development.

2
Community of Dornum, East Frisia
(buildings, water, dike)



A Historical Layer—Gulf Houses (*Gulfhäuser*) in East Frisia

The marshes of East Frisia, a part of Lower Saxony located on the North Sea, are an artificial and hard-won territory. The land as a space of living and production is maintained with great efforts: it would drown if it was not protected by dikes and drainage systems. Historically, flooding was the cause for both fertile soils but also great catastrophes (▶1).

The Gulf house is a characteristic, historical agrarian building type—a large building with a living part as well as a barn and stables under one roof. These houses are spatially dispersed in the marshes—a homogeneous spreading, where the cultivated farmland is located directly around the farmstead. The settlement structure is a main structural and functional element of the territory (▶2).

The building type of the Gulf house is an innovation of sixteenth and seventeenth century. It evolved in times of economic vitality and good trading opportunities, when due to drainage more land was being cultivated for grain farming, and thus more space was needed for storing the harvest (Gläntzer 2002, 58). For the genesis process of the Gulf house, local traditions and differentiations played equally as important a role as widespread innovation and homogenization. The evolution is connected to Dutch settlers and is a process of cultural transfer. But also local preconditions influenced the evolution as in some areas the type developed by connecting formerly separated houses for living and livestock and in other areas the type was built by integrating the housing part from the beginning into the framing structure of the barn (Ibid., 74). The evolution of the Gulf house shows how the development of a building type is affected by existing types and customs and is adapted to changing requirements as well as to architectural styles. It shows how cultural import meets local traditions and how through this process innovation is created—traditions and new models go hand in hand in a process of invention.

The historical buildings and the related, homogeneously spread settlement structure in the marshes have a deep connection to the fabric of the territory due to their adaption to local conditions, their usage, and their evolution over long periods of time. Spread throughout the territory, and structuring it in a grid-type planar way without constituting spatially connected villages, each Gulf house defines a place of living, working, and producing in the landscape. The Gulf house and smaller adjacent buildings are located on a dwelling mount to protect them from the water. Surrounding trees protect against wind and rain and help to keep basements dry. The farmsteads are connected to the street system, depending on the drainage system, and situated in direct relation to the arable land. Up to the present day, the farmsteads with the Gulf houses shape the character of the territory by their physical appearance, their functional consequences, and their cultural meaning. This accounts for the specificity and uniqueness of the cultural landscape and adds to its identity (▶3).

But the building type of the Gulf house is not meeting today's demands anymore. New Gulf houses have not been built for more than half a century. Additionally,

3
Gulf house on dwelling mount in Dornum, East Frisia

4
Wind energy in Dornum,
East Frisia

the structural changes in agriculture cause many farmsteads and Gulf houses to vanish. New functions are not easy to find. To adapt and maintain such a large building, which is not integrated in a village structure, is a challenge that needs strong dedication. Especially from a heritage protection point of view, and for historical cultural landscape studies, the remaining agrarian buildings are highly valuable. The existing building stock can be seen as a 1:1 scale archive in the landscape—informing us about the history of cultivation in this territory (Quasten 1997, 24). On the other hand, the loss of buildings is a cultural manifestation of today´s world, leaving equally strong effects in the territory. But this is not necessarily a sustainable way to go. Concerning the future development of territorial character and identity, the valuation and evolution of the Gulf houses and the related settlement and landscape structures have to be discussed. Defining them as historic and outdated, and thus wasting their resource for future development, seems too narrow and not forward-looking enough. The resilient construction and the large interior volume bring about spatial possibilities for altered uses. The settlement structure accounts for potentials in terms of visibility, structuring, and orientation. Questions arise about future uses which have a relation to territorial trends and visions and about how to deal with the buildings between the poles of preservation, conversion, and substitution. This requires mindful architectural work in dealing with the substance and also a new cultural awareness, connected to both knowledge and practices.

Manifestations of Contemporary Complexity

In addition to the issue of the Gulf house, the results of the analysis of the case study community of Dornum reveal the growing complexity of this territory. Apart from being a home to East Frisian people with a more or less common collective history, culture, language, and understanding, this region is also a nature reserve of global significance—the Wadden Sea was designated as a World Natural History Site by UNESCO in 2009. It is a tourist destination—accommodating more than 500,000 overnight stays per year in a community of not even 5,000 inhabitants. Furthermore, it is an economic area with many new, influential actors and embedded in global market flows.

In this setting, the North Sea, being an essential point of reference and a determining factor in the territory, has gained even more levels of meaning. The North Sea strongly influences weather conditions and the water is a possible threat to the usability and security of the populated land. With rising sea levels this threat becomes even more severe. The Wadden Sea is a nature reserve and is a habitat for many species. The recent bio-invasion of the Japanese oyster caused by human cultivation shows the effects of globalization. Waste that washes up on the shores reveals the effects of our consumer culture. The North Sea holds minor and major infrastructural connections. It is an important fishing area. It is used for energy production with offshore wind parks and is crossed by gas pipes. It is a recreation area for inhabitants and tourists.

There is a similar story on the land: vacancies as a result of rising property and real estate prices can be observed. There are demographic changes and many new arrivals, most of all elderly people. Habits of living, working, everyday culture, and mobility are changing and becoming differentiated. For village communities, the local pub has become more and more unimportant and finally disappeared. The habits of the inhabitants have changed, but ambiguously the loss of the community pub is regretted anyways. Street life, especially in the coastal villages, has undergone considerable change. The streetscape is crowded in summer with tourists, whereas in off-season many permanently closed shutters are typically observed.

Overall, there is the necessity for a sustainable development, but on the contrary, the Biosphere Reserve is seen as a development threat. Agriculture is influenced by severe structural changes and is not always in line with the aim of protecting nature. Many actors make demands, which are in parts contradictory in terms of usage, protection, exploitation, and valuation. The rural community of Dornum is at the same time in a competition for inhabitants, investments, tourists, and subsidies and is looking for development strategies to stay attractive.

Within this complex transformation, the cultural landscape is changing. This is most obvious in the striking verticality of the numerous wind power plants (▶**4**).

Concerning settlement development, there is a continuing trend since the seventies that the villages next to the sea shore are growing through secondary and holiday homes as well as other facilities for tourism. Villages and towns further away from the shore lose inhabitants and small-scale businesses, which results in vacant buildings and shops.

In contrast to the logic of the Gulf house—a very fine articulation of material and functional relations and spatial quality—contemporary buildings follow a different logic. Often the architectural and urban quality, as well as the relation with the landscape is weak. Two following examples will illustrate this:

The village extensions of Nessmersiel appear like octopus arms clinging to the dike—they sprawl without spatial density or public space, but following a real estate logic that hunts for best locations. An example of one of the many secondary homes in that row of buildings shows their absurdity: the two owners, absent most time of the year, express their individuality with varying front doors, postboxes, and paving. The access to the heating room, located in the prominent axis of the house, completes the discordance and leaves an anonymous character (▶**5**).

Despite many vacancies in the village of Dornum, the community center is a new construction. The sadness of the place is striking. This cheerless and generic building is neither integrated in the urban fabric nor into the landscape. It is located a remote distance from the village center and thus has no connection to other public spaces. Its forecourt is a parking lot. The building is located directly on the field, whereas the parking is surrounded by an inhomogeneous collection of fences, bushes, diverse trees, and several signs. Neither does this create a qualitative open space nor a hospitable atmosphere. The building and the site is a mere shell

5
Secondary home in Nessmersiel

6
Community center in Dornum

that could host equally a supermarket or pigs. It does not provide specific spatial offers or qualities and thus lacks any sense of community life or potential for the unexpected (▶6).

Only at first glance do the two buildings seem like miniatures of the Gulf house, but on closer inspection they lack qualitative detailing, architectural expression, and differentiated open space. Both cases indicate the poor condition of urban planning, architecture, and building practices in the case study area today. Functional and economic aspects supersede all attention for liveliness, beauty, coherence, and identification. Existing vacant buildings could have been re-appropriated and recycled, and soil sealing could have been prevented. Both examples are missed chances for the maintenance of existing built resources and urban structures, for the refinement of cultural imprints, and for a further and updated development of territorial characteristics and qualities.

Consequences for Architectural Practice

Rural territories in Northern Germany are undergoing profound changes, which can be interpreted as a process of urbanization with inherent dynamic potential. Along with economic, technical, and social progress, historical building types fall out of use and many new built elements add to complexity and inconsistency. At the same time, characteristic cultural landscapes of high quality are valuated as soft location factors in regional competition. The valorization of the cultural landscape and its elements is one aspect, but apart from that the cultural landscape of tomorrow is literally being built.

It is not static but develops within the urban dynamic. This understanding enlarges the concept of heritage protection with regard to possibilities for innovation. New narratives and practices can link the transformation of the territory to the identity of people and places. In this framework, architectural practice is needed to discuss and design a regional building culture. Therefore, a holistic and critical understanding of a territory with its relational structure of visible and invisible, characteristic and generic elements is fundamental. Architectural practice needs the global as well as the local perspective to advance sustainable development. Historical, contemporary, and future trends and values have to be taken into consideration concerning physical manifestations and also functional, social, and cultural needs. The continuity and further advancement of historical buildings, as well as settlement and landscape structures, is an important issue and task that is embedded in the transformation of a territory. Characteristic building materials, construction techniques, and craftsmanship, as well as morphologies, spatial setups, and structures retain their relevance for the future—not in terms of reconstruction of the past but as adaptations to present-day requirements and as updates of regional specificity. The task for architects must be to creatively find potential qualities while using regional resources and keeping in mind regional values.

Visions for a cultural landscape have to be developed, which, instead of simply exploiting the territory, envision characteristic and sustainable places that enable an enriched cultural and community life and give rise to a characteristic architecture embedded in the territory.

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Note

1 The relational structure of buildings and settlements in the territory is analyzed by the Chair of Regional Building and Urban Planning of Leibniz University, Hannover in the framework of the research project "Regiobranding—Branding von Stadt-Land-Regionen durch Kulturlandschaftscharakteristika." The research project is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. It looks for a branding of regions through the valorization of cultural landscape characteristics. Case studies are three areas in the Metropolitan Region of Hamburg. http://www.regiobranding.de/

LandLust—The "Knowability" of Post-Pastoral Ruralism

Eckart Voigts

Prologue

I am a small-town boy who has lived in a tiny village, a hamlet of 360 inhabitants, for three years. Brunswick is not far, so I live in a rural satellite to a city.

Why do I live there? Answer (1): When I look out of my window I see green pastures and horses grazing. Lucklum is a rural idyll, a space of recreation and well-being. (▶1) It used to be a *Kommende*, the tiniest division of the European landed estate under the control of a commander of a military order—in our case the Deutsche Orden. Novalis penned some of his poetry there. Now it belongs to the Jägermeister family, producers of the globally distributed herbal liqueur.

Why do I live there? Answer (2): Home ownership is affordable while city rents are high. I have a car that takes me to work in twenty minutes; I have a car that takes me to grocery stores and bakeries in five minutes. I have a car that takes me to theaters in Berlin and Hamburg in two hours. Because city people have cars too they swarm to Lucklum and the Reitling Valley on weekends. They ride motorbikes or bicycles. Some are wearing lycra track suits, looking silly. Occasionally, there is roadkill. Essentially, then, Lucklum is an *exurb*, part of an extra-urban commuter belt, relatively wealthy, as the German *Speckgürtel* (literally, fat or flab belt). According to Küpper et al. (2011), mobility is the key to social participation in rural areas—which helps explain this initial focus on my car.

Lucklum is a refuge, a space defined by its absences. Until 2013, for instance, the absence of fast wifi—a huge drawback. As the fake Visit Cornwall[1] ad that trended

virally early in 2015 argues, however, absences can be welcome. "This shit would never happen in Cornwall" as one caption summarizes the anti-city bias aggressively, attacking urbanites as "subterranean dwelling monkey" and "gigantic London twat."

Rural Southern Lower Saxony, just like Cornwall, is free of city horrors like overpricing and density, compressed city living, or the inconveniences of public transport. I would like to think it is space that is not attractive to terrorists either. The country is where people go in times of crises. Now, Lucklum even has refugees, a large family from Syria and one from Iran, put up in the local community center. This is not going to make Lucklum as famous as Sumte, the hamlet of 100 people that took more than 1,000 refugees.

In spite of living in the countryside I would like to think of myself as urbane, civilized, and cosmopolitan. My exurb mentality, then, is essentially urban. Maybe I am an example of the postmodern collapse of the country-city divide, which may have a particularly strong residual

1
Entrance to Lucklum in Lower Saxony

impact in England (see the discussion in Pleßke 2014, 116). In terms of sustainability, the exurb lifestyle is questionable, in spite of the relatively low-emission car. This introduction is a case in point for the major thread that has run through recent discourses about ruralism in general: The country and the city are inextricably linked in a variety of ways—the old opposition between them is false, or, at best, reductive. Instead, attitudes towards the country are paradoxical and ambivalent, overcoming the simple idealization of William Cowper: "God made the country, and man made the town" (Bunce 1994, 1–2). The fake Visit Cornwall ad can rely on a long tradition of anti-urban affect, culminating in Romanticism and probably best epitomized by the "dark Satanic mills" in William Blake's *Jerusalem* or William Cobbett's attack on the "pestiferous growth" of London in his *Rural Rides*.

First Act: Knowable Communities

This essay takes the liberty of looking not just at the future, but also the past of villages and small towns in an urbanizing world, because this past crucially shapes our notion of what a village is. Both a real past and the ideals and concepts produced by the past.

The example of my urban mentalities in a rural location underwrites one of my key arguments: that cultural texts—novels, films, poetry, but also magazines, advertisements et cetera—by poetically condensing and expressing emotions and mentalities, render the cultural specificities of the flight to or from the land, and thus rural space "knowable" and "communicable." In his classic study *The Country and the City*, Raymond Williams described novels as "knowable communities" (Williams 1973, 65). Charles Dickens's novels make the city knowable, Thomas Hardy's the country. Williams already pointed out that there is no country or city truth outside the constructive consciousness of the observer's standpoint. As the collections of Mary Ann Caws (1991) or Burden and Kohl (2006) point out, both rural and urban spaces cannot be known outside of discursive construction. As I write this, Tristram Hunt (2016) has reinforced these observations of Williams's classic and adapted them for contemporary culture. He praises Williams as a writer who can see the labor and the exploitation within the leisurely grandeur of the English country house, as well as the hybridity of the industrialized ruralism. Williams was, in other words, drawn to the hybrid border countries between the country and the city as early as in 1973.[2]

Why then do these literary texts examined here not suggest an intact binary of rural-urban inequities and inequalities? How do we already see a "rurban" cultural confluence of the city and the country? My diagnosis shows: The cultural space is always imaginary, but contemporary narratives of urbanity seek to redress the balance of rural nostalgia, exploding the bucolic, idyllic, pastoral traditions. In this sense, every rural space is almost as artificial as Hampton Court, Richmond Park, Richmond upon Thames; or, closer to home, Villa Richmond in Brunswick, which boasts an English garden laid out in 1768 from plans by Lancelot Capability Brown, who littered the park with "clumps" and "dots"—a space that can be advertised as a recreational rurban refuge. Formerly given to Princess Augusta, a daughter of

the Hanoverian king George III, it is now owned and maintained by the city of Brunswick and used for rural representationalism, providing an entirely fictional, artificial, and idealized view of the countryside for special occasions such as weddings. The 360 degree panoramic view prepared by the local media business panoKreativ for the city of Brunswick's website, exploits the touristic potential of this rural space of leisure as part of the otherwise decidedly urban Brunswick.

In *The Country and the City*, Raymond Williams discusses post-industrialized ruralism. Up until 1800, all of Germany was very much like Lucklum at that time: agrarian. The industrial revolution changed that, first in Britain, and from about 1830 in Germany too, and Bunce (1994, 8) argues that the idealization of the countryside was a direct result of the "urban-industrial revolution," but also concomitant with the countryside's transformation. Now, agrarian technology has revolutionized rural spaces beyond recognition. Now, there is GPS reaping and wind power, or as Ulrich Stock wrote in a scathing attack on rural nostalgia in the German weekly *Die Zeit*:

„Gesinde und Gesense sind romantisch verklärte Vergangenheit, der 350-PS-Mähdrescher mit Xenon-Vorfeldbeleuchtung für den Nachteinsatz bestimmt die Gegenwart. Ein lasergesteuerter Melkroboter nimmt es mit gleich 70 Kühen auf."

(Stock 2011)

"Servants and scything are a thing of the romantically glorified past—the present is shaped by the 350-horsepower-driven combine harvester, boasting Xenon apron headlights for night use. The laser-controlled milking robot takes care of as many as seventy cows."[3]

The marketing for Lucklum, Evessen, and similar places, however, described as the "Tuscany of the North" in local media, projects an untainted space, paradoxically enriched by cultural diversity. Advertising for businesses in Evessen focuses on *Bioläden* and *Bauchtanz* (organic food and belly dancing). The local organic bakery sells wholegrain bread and organic wine, and other rural health food produce for urban lifestyle consumption. Tourism is replacing agrarian culture, and the new *ruralites* are derided as *Bionade Bohème* (punning on a popular organic lemonade) and *Lohas* (Loha for "Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability," see Gernert 2008). In 2015, Dörte Hansen published *Altes Land*, a biting satire on this kind of *Bauerntheater*, a folk theater performed by city dwellers retreating to rural areas. She calls them "academic has-beens and a B-list creative class" ("ausgemusterte Akademiker und Kreative der Güteklasse B," 91) and "social washouts on their last leg, trying to give it another go on the farm" ("gesellschaftliche Ladenhüter, die auf dem Bauernhof noch einmal durchstarten möchten," 20). She contrasts the former text editor Burkhard (corduroy trousers, fake *Plattdütsch* accents) with the agrarian industrialist Dirk zum Felde, "like a four-lane motorway in a heritage film" ("wie eine vierspurige Autobahn in einem Heimatfilm," 92). The formerly urban creative class, sporting fake rural accents and wearing designer cords and wellies, have turned into eco-nazis, challenged by the arrival of a divorced urban refugee in Hansen's novel.

Second Act: *LandLust*

Disgruntled urbanites, then, like me, for whom the village is a refuge, can be the easy target of contemporary satire. As Canan Topçu (2015) has shown, magazines such as *LandLust* (or, in England: *Country Life*) cater to the nostalgic desire for ruralism. In a way, England provides the primal scene of this adapted German ruralist nostalgia. Significantly, *Country Life* was founded in 1897, when British rural life had already been lost for good. This nostalgic desire is best embodied by the rural enterprises of Prince Charles, who edited a special edition of *Country Life* on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday in November 2013. Issues such as 'blood sports' (i.e., hunting) are still high on the agenda in a country that continues to see itself as rural in spite of the fact that it was the home of the industrial revolution.

In the nineteen-eighties the idea of heritage ruralism was hotly debated in Britain. The *Biedermeier* version of *Deep England* was severely attacked by Patrick Wright or, Robert Hewison as ideologically compromised by the conservative, neoliberal backlash of Margaret Thatcher. As Helsinger (1997, 7) points out, the countryside lends itself to unifying the discourses of nationalist heritage—discourses that see the past as something which can be possessed. The confusion about definitions, internal contradictions, masks and myths of Englishness and Britishness are legion and can be charted, for instance in Burden's introduction to the collection *Landscape and Englishness* (2006, 13–17). *Country Life*'s current self-description on the web illustrates this conflation

of nationalist heritage discourses with the lifestyles of well-being and the branding of the countryside:

> "Country Life, the quintessential English magazine, is undoubtedly one of the biggest and instantly recognizable brands in the UK today. The magazine comments in depth on a wide variety of subjects, such as architecture, property, the arts, gardens and gardening, the countryside, schools and wildlife. This eclectic editorial mix, combined with stunning photography and high-end property advertising ensures that week after week, Country Life is read by people who live the real country house lifestyle." (Country Life)

Only from this perspective, considering the grass-roots traditions of *Country Life* or *The National Trust*, a private charity founded in 1895 that gained its mass membership (now over three million) after World War II, can we understand the specifically English mix of conservationism and rural lifestyles. Since the nineteen-eighties, however, the increasing branding of England as an old country contributed to the commercialization of the English countryside (with an emphasis on the south and the southwest).

A case in point is the persistent vogue for heritage films that can be sold from Britain to the US, whereas in Germany the post-war *Heimatfilm* became the butt of jokes and the *Anti-Heimatfilm* emerged in the late sixties (*Jagdszenen aus Niederbayern*, "Hunting Scenes from Bavaria," dir. Peter Fleischmann, 1968). Edgar Reitz's various *Heimat* miniseries (1984, 1992, 2006) attempted both a rescue and a synthesis of German concepts of *Heimat* (see Voigts-Virchow 2007). In nineteen-eighties Germany, the "back to nature-ethos" (*Zurück zur Natur*) found a receptacle in the party Die Grünen (Green Party) as well as in Joseph Beuys. In the context of Beuys's "extended definition of art" (*Erweiterter Kunstbegriff*) he sought for *Stadt-Verwaldung* anstelle von *Stadt-Verwaltung* (Beuys 1984; "a pun replacing city administration with city forestation").

In the twenty-first century Germany has caught up, and the trend towards "Heimotion" (Matthias Horx)—an emotionally loaded return to the homely space in conjunction with a cocooned, slowed down pace—is unmistakable. German "folk music" (*Volksmusik*) is back in a diluted, pop fashion, an ethnomusicological renaissance of the German desire for a harmonious *Heimat*, decades after odes to "Greek wine" (Udo Jürgens, *Griechischer Wein*, 1977) had displaced in the German *Schlager* (i.e., hit record), that had made "Volkstum volks-dumm" (a pun conflating ethnicity and stupidity). Helene Fischer, informed by international pop norms, however, is a far cry from *Volksmusik* roots, such as "Kein schöner Land in dieser Zeit, als hier das uns're weit und breit" (1840), one of the signature tunes of the apolitical *Wandervogelbewegung* (literally "movement of wandering birds," an apolitical German youth organization founded in 1896 and peaking in the pre-Nazi years). Büchner-prize winning novelist Arnold Stadler has written eloquently about the limitations of living in an Upper Swabian village, its linguistic and other failures, its narrow horizons. "Unsere Heimat war immer schwarz, auch im Sommer." ("Our homeland was always black, even in summer"; for black read: dark and conservative) claims

the narrator of his first book, and states that spring used to be so late that it was always deferred to the next year. In *Mein Hund, meine Sau, mein Leben* (1994) the name Mengele (denoting both the SS physician and the business producing agrarian technology founded by Mengele's father) epitomizes the desperation of his youth and adolescence in rural Heidegger country (see Hamm 1999).

The contemporary German equivalent of *Country Life, LandLust*, was first published more than one hundred years later than its parent publication, in 2005. It has—against the digital grain—significantly increased its readership and currently boasts a remarkable one million print run for a predominantly elderly, wealthy, conservative, and female, but by no means necessarily rural readership ("die gutsituierte und kaufkräftige, naturverbundene, wertkonservative Leserschaft," Ute Frieling-Huchzermeyer in Eichel 2008). It has spawned a set of copycat magazines *LandLeben, LandIdee, Land-Spiegel, Liebes Land, Mein Schönes Land, Hörzu Heimat* (see Stock 2011, Gernert 2008). As Ulrich Stock's survey of this rural nostalgia indicates, apparently more than ten million Germans would prefer to live in the countryside rather than in the city. Attitudes and *structures of feeling*—rural nostalgia seem to be remarkably at odds with reality—urban depopulation. Eichel (2008) notes an escapist desire for the mediveal *hortus conclusus*, the secluded garden disconnected from the vagaries of the world, and invokes the rejection of politics by the *Wandervogelbewegung*, which was later engulfed by the Nazi *Hitlerjugend*.

Third Act: Pastoralism and Deep Ecology

In his classic 1973 study, Raymond Williams suggested that "the contrast of the country and city is one of the major forms in which we become conscious of a central part of our experience and of the crises of our society" (289). From this, "Williams crafts a radical narrative of English national identity founded on a mix of 'the rural and urban,'" as Tristram Hunt (2015) interprets. As we have seen, he deconstructs this persisting country-city binary. Williams both insists that these utopian, dichotomous attitudes focused on a timeless ruralism are uniquely English, but that they are also reflecting the (transnational) capitalist progress of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the words of Hunt, "this quickening of the capitalist pace within English society gave rise to a more confident urban order. In the aftermath of the agrarian revolution and Industrial Revolution, rural and urban had to be understood as one" (2016). Indeed, agrarian utopianism has been strong in British culture and the modernist embracing of urbanism was weaker in Britain than elsewhere in Europe. In his influential 2011 study, Edward Glaeser diagnosed *The Triumph of the City* and called for contemporary culture to "stop romanticizing rural villages" (15).

At this point I should introduce the word *pastoral*—well established in literary studies and defined by critics such as William Empson in *Some Versions of Pastoral* in 1935 or Laurence Lerner in *The Uses of Nostalgia* (1972) in the nineteen-seventies. It is writing on the countryside, on shepherds, by courtiers for courtiers. As Lerner holds, to write about nature poetry is to write about nature, but to

write about pastoral is to write about nostalgia. Arcadia, the Golden Age, the Garden of Eden—these are no places and times one can conceive of other than mind spaces and mind times. In books such as *Romantic Ecology* and *The Song of the Earth* (2000), literary critic Jonathan Bate claimed that poems can be regarded as "imaginary parks in which we may breathe an air that is not toxic and accommodate ourselves to a mode of dwelling that is not alienated" (Bate 2000, 64). This is pastoral because it is imaginary.

The lesson of deep ecology runs like this: change anthropocentric attitudes—social and political change will follow. The turning point maybe the Romantic poetry of John Clare, who gives a voice to the dispossessed, violated country itself in *The Lament of Swordy Well* (1832-7):

"On pity's back I needn't jump
My looks speak loud alone
My only tree they've left a stump
And nought remains my own."[4]

(Clare 1832–37)

Against this is pitted the anti-pastoral writing of real country life. The eighteenth century poet George Crabbe, a specialist on the real life of cottagers, wrote: "I paint the Cot, / As Truth will paint it, and as Bards will not" (qtd. in Empson 1935, 125). Recent ecocriticism tells us that maybe we have now entered phases that have been described as "post-pastoral, urban pastoral or gay pastoral" (Gifford 2013) or even "post-nature" (Clark 2013)—all of these terms suggesting the hybridity or even ideological infiltration of these terms. *LandLust* and *Country Life* in their current shapes are a case in point as they create the countryside as a space of consumption.

Like it or not, however, the commercialized, post-natural and post-pastoral nature is inevitably political and it is interesting to note that the *LandLust* trend coincided with a renewed debate on cultural criticism in Germany (see Bollenbeck 2007; Konersmann 2008) and the emergence of an intensified anti-modern (and implicitly anti-European) critical Englishness in England. One of its spokespersons in England is Oliver Kingsnorth. Whether this *Kulturkritik*, "cultural criticism," in the vein of Kingsnorth, who dichotomizes country and city, juxtaposing the Bluewater Shopping Mall with the loss of "Real England," falls prey to a post-pastoral or post-natural fallacy of naturalization is open to debate. Kingsnorth travels to the countryside of Kent, the "Garden of England," and finds Bluewater Shopping Mall:

> "I look around me. Everything here is controlled. Everything is part of an overall plan. From the trees to the spires, the pillars to the litter bins, the lakes to the drinks machines. Everything fits.
>
> Inside the Wintergarden, the first thing I see is a statue. Rising perhaps 20 feet high, dominating all around it. It is a statue of a Coke bottle. Affixed to its sides are four telescreens, silver and rounded, beaming out Coke adverts and Sky news. Behind the statue rise six imposing white stone pillars, holding up a high atrium of glass and steel. On top of every pillar is a brace of CCTV cameras. Everything I am doing is being monitored.

> From nowhere, now, comes a hidden voice. Female, mellifluous, well-elocuted, it advises me to keep my belongings with me at all times. And now I know what this is. It just seems so obvious, so clear. This is totalitarian."

While this is obviously unintended, the linkage of totalitarianism and femininity rings blatantly misogynous. Kingsnorth's argument romanticizes the countryside as he links the loss of ethnic identity, cast in vitalistic terms as "living culture," to the loss of rural space:

> "You hear people all the time moaning about how the traditions of this country are disappearing, we're not in touch with our heritage, nobody celebrates St George's day anymore, blah, blah. But most of these old traditions, when they were living, they came from the land and from people's attachment to it. These days we don't know where we are, or what happens in our landscape, so we can't create new ones. Traditions come from places—from the land, from our relationship to it. Once that's gone, so has that living culture."

This kind of indictment of the rurban loss of landscapes has become rather influential in Britain. In my German ears, it sounds like an anti-modern *Kulturkritik* at its worst. The line of rural nostalgia in Britain is unbroken, while in Germany, it came to be tainted with the racist *Blut und Boden* (literally, "blood and soil") ideology of Richard Walther Darré (1895–1953), the idealized agrarianism of the Nordic-German landed aristocracy. When Gottfried Benn ridiculed the suburban Nazi agrarianism in 1941, this resonates eerily with contemporary idealizations of the country, the self-bred pancakes of the "Vollgermane" ("fully Teutonic").

Fourth Act: *Landflucht*

Rural Exodus

It turns out that historically, literature of the countryside in its guises of bucolic, pastoral, rustic, georgic, is frequently implicated in cultural and social criticism. Flight from the land or rural exodus—or, with Max Weber in German: *Landflucht*—has been described as one of the major migratory trends of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As Curtis (2014, 28) has pointed out, the "vulnerability of rural settlements in many areas has arguably increased into the twentieth century with the dissemination of highly dominant urban culture, the development of technological solutions, and the fact that so many rural people are now divorced from the agricultural productive processes."

A case of literature of urban depopulation that predates the cultural critics of the countryside, John Clare and George Crabbe as well as William Cobbett, is Oliver Goldsmith's long poem *The Deserted Village* (1770), at the very beginning of the cataclysmic changes brought by the industrial revolution. It works with this kind of contrast, introducing an idyllic, pastoral scene that associated Landscape and youth:

"Sweet Auburn, loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheared the labouring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed,
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,
How often have I loitered o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endeared each scene!"

In an antithetical turn, the idyll is then contrasted with the destruction through enclosures. Goldsmith criticizes rural depopulation, the moral corruption found in towns, consumerism, enclosure, landscape gardening, avarice, and the pursuit of wealth from international trade:

"Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay:
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied."
(Goldsmith 1770)

Echoes of Goldsmith abound in Kingsnorth, who amalgamates notions of Englishness with a revitalized attitude towards landscape. The connection of landscape and Englishness—unthinkable in Germany after the perversions of *Blut und Boden*—are quite fascinating. This kind of contrast feeds the lyrical *Kulturkritik* of the urban poet Erich Kästner, whose poem "Die Wälder schweigen" projected the rural space as varied, healthy and recuperative—in stark comparison to the city: "Man zählt die Tage, und man zählt die Gelder. / Man sehnt sich fort aus dem Geschrei der Stadt." ("While you count down the days and stack up the pound notes / Yearning to flee the clamorous city life.")

The contrasts of country and city initiate an osmotic, two-way diffusion, a to and fro between hectic modernity and healthy seasonal rhythms.

It is easy to make fun of the discrepancies between the commercialized idealization of country life and its harsh realities. In Britain around the millennium, theater plays such as Nell Leyshon's *Comfort me with Apples* (2005) or

Richard Bean's *Harvest* (2005) have addressed this New Ruralism. The epic play *Harvest* follows the fate of an East Yorkshire pig farm from 1914 to 2008 and its tale of Englishness threatened by an abject modernity resonated surprisingly well with contemporary audiences. The juxtaposition of meanings ascribed to rural areas and the realities of working there is basis of Hansen's satire in *Altes Land* and publications such as Martin Reichert's *Landlust—Ein Selbstversuch in der deutschen Provinz* or Hilal Sezgin's *Landleben—Von einer, die raus zog*. Ulrich Stock made the point in *Die Zeit* in 2011, contrasting the exigencies of industrialized European farming with rural sentimentalism:

„Der Bauer hat keine Lust auf Diskurs und auch keine Zeit dazu. Ihm sitzt zu viel im Nacken. Brüssel, der Milchpreis, der jüngste Futterskandal. Er muss um seine Existenz und seinen Betrieb kämpfen. Innovation, Investition, Wachstum, das beschäftigt ihn. Und nun säumen sentimentale Städter seinen Hof, die Nutztiere nur aus dem Streichelzoo kennen und sich daran stören, dass seine Kühe Nummern haben statt Namen.“

(Stock 2011)

"These days farmers have no appetite for discussions—and no time. There's too much breathing down his neck: Brussels, the price of milk, the latest feed scandal. They are fighting for the survival of their farms. Innovations, investment, growth, that is what keeps farmers busy. On top of it all, they find their farms lined with sentimental urbanites who have never seen livestock outside of a petting zoo, complaining about the fact that the cows are numbered rather than named."

As we have seen, Stock's criticism is part of a long tradition of attacking untruthful representations of country life. A case in point is the attack on neoclassical idealization in George Crabbe's *The Village* (1783):

"Yes, thus the Muses sing of happy swains,
Because the Muses never knew their pains.
They boast their peasants' pipes, but peasants now
Resign their pipes and plod behind the plough;
And few amid the rural tribe have time
To number syllables and play with rhyme."

(Crabbe 1783)

There is no clear, unbroken trend towards a village exodus. In a time of crisis—war or economic turmoil—the country and villages have seen massive repopulation, often with problematic consequences as refugees tended not to be welcome in rural areas, 12.5 million *Vertriebene* expatriates after the war or the re-patriated Eastern German *Aussiedler* (re-patriated ethnic emigrants) after the fall of the Iron Curtain, whereas the so-called *Gastarbeiter* (visiting, migrant workers), of the nineteen-sixties predominantly settled in urban areas, where they were in demand as a workforce (Henkle 2012, 126). Currently, however, fleeing rural areas, the so-called *LANDFLUCHT 3.0* is the trend of urban depopulation. The demographic data recently supplied by the Bertelsmann Stiftung corroborates this early twenty-first-century diagnosis of increasing rural depopulation in Germany, and presumably throughout the post-industrial, neo-capitalist communities of western Europe.[5] It is common knowledge that urbanization is a global trend: the UN World Globalization Prospect found that since 2007 more people are living in cities than in the country. As Claudia Neu argues, however, the trends towards a polarization of inequality can also be identified in much smaller units than the current twenty-eight plus megacities resulting from the accelerated urbanization forecast in the key scenarios (Neu 2015, 19). For all its qualities as bucolic idyllic and urbanite refuge, the rural space where I live is defined as a "deficit space." In fact, the small rural town where I spent my youth and adolescence, the Middle Hessian *Residenzstädtchen* (i.e., former residence of a count) Laubach and its neighboring community Grünberg are precisely the kinds of communities affected by this trend.

On 11 December 2014, German quality daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* ran a report that supported the cliché of aging, depopulating rural areas (Nienhaus 2014). The story focused on the Großkopf family—a medical couple with two kids—who had moved to smalltown Grünberg, but then decided to return to Frankfurt. The story of middle-aged families with children reverting their *Stadtflucht* to *Landflucht* affected me because I was brought up in precisely this kind of small town setting. I frequently go back to visit

my parents, my mum is an octogenarian and my dad nonagenarian—exactly the kind of people you expect to live in these superannuated rural towns.

Judith Schalansky's Bildungsroman *Der Hals der Giraffe* (2011) is set precisely in one of those depopulated, vulnerable communities described by Neu or Küpper et al. The protagonist is a biology teacher poignantly focused on evolutionary theory whose school (Charles-Darwin-Gymnasium) in Vorpommern is about to close in four years' time as a consequence of depopulation. This Darwinian scenario of a rural area's failure to survive (presumably as unfit), however, is not unique to the German East, as a fellow teacher points out: "Halb Niedersachsen steht leer." (half of Lower Saxony is empty; Schalansky 2011, 44). Similar problems have riddled all of Europe. As Nell Leyshon points out with reference to her play *Comfort Me with Apples*, the depopulation and attendant social problems suffer from the reduced visibility of that space:

> "Just after the war, there were twenty-one farms in the village. When I was living there as a child there were 14. Now there are one and a half, and it has become a dormitory village. It seems shocking that no one noticed. Everyone noticed the shipyards going, everyone noticed the coal mines going. Nobody noticed what happened to farming."
> (Qtd. in Spencer 2007)

The village that inspired her play is Compton Dundon in Somerset, but the problems in Germany are similar. As particularly young, female, and well-educated inhabitants are leaving, the contemporary German village is:

> "Male
> Old
> Uneducated"
> (Henkel 2012, 124–126)

Gerhard Henkel, however, sketches a more varied picture: Today's village has both won and lost people in the past 200 years; in the nineteenth century, there was an exodus, particularly to the US, and, more importantly, rural migrant workers agglomerated in cities. In Britain, this industrialist migration into the cities happened earlier than in Germany. Around 1800, the large majority of the German population lived in the countryside. The industrial revolution brought a new social type, the factory worker, and a new type of city, the large urban agglomerate marked by secularism, anonymity, industrialization, and intensified infrastructures. Oliver Goldsmith is an early critic of the trend towards rural depopulation that intensified after he had written his attack on the practice of enclosing common land that peaked in the eighteenth century, thus turning public into private ownership (see for this Thompson 2008; Dyer and Jones 2010).

To sum up: contemporary literature seems to be heeding Glaeser's admonition to stop romanticizing rural life, from Stadler's depression to the satirical novels by Hansen, Sezgin, or Reichert, or the plays by Leyshon and Bean. The picture, however, is more ambivalent than that, and the texts discussed render the countryside and its relationship with the triumphant urbanism along the lines suggested by Raymond Williams as both more knowable and more contradictory than the simple dichotomy suggests. The statement that there is an unbroken anti-ruralist bias in urban

literature is too dualistic. Even Joachim Ringelnatz' *Landflucht* (1928) testifies to the complex, two-way diffusion of urban-rural exchange that has generated the modernist "restlessness" (*Ruhelosigkeit*—a key word in this poem), but continues to inform the urban-rural relationship:

„Fort vom Lande, aus dem engen
Städtchen in die Großstadt flieht der Geist,
Wo im Kampf der Mengen
Er zerreißt.
Dort, wo Puls und Uhr
Schneller ticken,
Wird er sich zusammenflicken,
Wenn er's erst versteht,
Daß die unbezwingliche Natur
Auch auf Radiowellen,
Schienenspur
Und Propellerschwingen weitergeht.
Wenn ihm das gelingt,
Wenn er nicht darüber ganz verkommt,
Wenn ihm die Erkenntnis frommt,
Daß die Nachtigall genau so singt
Wie ein Spatz
Am Alexanderplatz, – – –
Ja, dann wird ihn wohl
von Zeit zu Zeit
Eine Sehnsucht wieder landwärts tragen
In die Enge, in die Einsamkeit.
– – –
Bis die simplen, friedlichen, gesunden
Bauern ihn nach Tagen
Oder Stunden
Wiederum verjagen;
In die große Stadt zurück.
Und dort wird er sagen:
Nur im Ruhelosen ruht das Glück."

(Ringelnatz 1928)

“Away from the country,
from the confines
of the small town into the city
flees the mind,
Where in the struggle with the
much and many
He‘s torn apart.
Where pulse and time
Tick faster
There he will patch and mend,
Once he understands
That indomitable nature
Proceeds on radio waves,
railway tracks
And on propeller wings as well.
Should he succeed
and not despair
and finally grasp
that the nightingale sings
just like
the sparrow does
on Alexanderplatz,

Well, then a yearning will
from time to time
carry him back countrywards
To narrowness and solitude.

Until the simple, peaceful,
healthy
Peasants will after days
Or hours chase him back again;
To the big city.
And there he will claim:
Bliss rests only in
restlessness.”

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Notes

1 See: Spoof ad on the website The Poke, 2015, appropriating the "Visit Cornwall" logo. https://twitter.com/thepoke/status/560350960451866624.

2 Although Hunt criticizes the absence of a number of significant hybrid borders in Williams's analysis: "Despite his feel for border countries, Williams has very little to say about the literature of suburbia, in either its Victorian or 20th-century manifestations. Equally, Garden Cities and New Towns, the 1960s 'silent spring' fears of ecological collapse or the interwar rediscovery of English nativism do not appear."

3 All the translations in this essay are my own. Thanks to Sarah Ablett and Sandra Schwab for additional ideas.

4 Unless otherwise indicated, all of the poems quoted here are out of copyright and readily available on the web, so that no reference is given.

5 "So können vor allem die Metropolen einen starken Bevölkerungsanstieg erwarten, während der ländliche Raum vielerorts schrumpft und stärker altert." https://www.wegweiser-kommune.de/meldungen/bevolkerungsprognose-handlungsbedarf-in-kommunen

Key Projects: Combining Potentials from Urban Ecologies —A Swedish Perspective

Nils Björling

Introduction

Planet-wide urbanization and the ongoing concentration and extension of human settlements generate both uneven conditions and uneven change. These transformations enforce an urban paradigm where large cities and urban networks dominate policy and discourse on economic growth, knowledge production, and the distribution of power. This theoretical framework stresses the need to renegotiate polarization between center and periphery and nature and society rather than enforcing divisions between, for example, urban and rural areas. Urbanization needs to be seen as an internal logic of how natural and human resources and skills are valued and transformed within all landscape categories.
Ongoing transformations and dichotomies between topographical, topological, and discursive centers and peripheries may cause vulnerable situations where shortage and blockages of resources, services, and decision mandates establish *fragile urban landscapes*, i.e., a local-regional lock-in of ecological, social, political, and economic processes. To handle these lock-ins for local-regional development and discuss new roles and dynamic relationships between different (urban) landscapes, this paper presents *Key Projects* and *Urban Ecologies* as conceptual tools. This paper discusses the potential of these conceptual tools from ongoing design-based research in two empirical case studies where the conceptual tools are used to identify discursive and material spatial conditions that sustain socio-economic-ecologic-processes, stage critical negotiations and constructive dialogue, combine local-regional

resources, and formulate and materialize alternatives that trans-value local resources and potential.

Urban Domination and Fragile Urbanization

Accelerating globalization, regionalization, and competition between cities to attract new inhabitants, skills, and economic investment changes sense-making relations at local and regional scales (Massey 2007; Sassen 2014). Within the debate on urbanization issues in Sweden during the last ten years, arguments and economic research that emphasize the city as a driving force for growth (Glaeser 2011; Florida 2006) have been numerous. They have often been paired with research and arguments for the city's ability to reduce need for transportation through its higher density, reinforcing the interplay with surrounding landscapes and thereby decreasing the total effects on climate change and other sustainability issues. The dense, mixed-use city has thereby been promoted as norm for both the prosperous and the sustainable city, indeed all life, and now dominates as the overall goal for urban planning. These biased future-visions of the sustainable city have of course been contested (Vinnova 2015; Gleeson 2012), but still have a massive impact on planning discourse, especially concerning relationships between urban and rural areas. Urban theorist Julia Fredriksson (2014) argues that planning practices based on domination by economic growth targets are highly problematic because they tend to exclude parts of the urban landscape that do not demonstrate such conditions, and thereby resources and people living there are excluded from being part of a "successful" society (Fredriksson 2014, 80). In addition, uneven geographic conditions are enforced and further confine local possibilities for development (Björling 2014). Together, these discursive and material shifts reduce the adaptive capacity of the local urban landscape and block local development. Suburban and rural areas as peripheries to economic centers are thereby neglected as fundamental parts for the development of society as a whole.

Building on Henri Lefebvre's work on planetary urbanization (Lefebvre 2003), Neil Brenner (2013) argues that the urban can no longer be defined as something contained within an un-urban other. Urbanization as both "concentrating urbanisation," (i.e., agglomeration of people, capital, investments, and an extensive cluster of urban development) and "extending urbanisation," (i.e., socio-spatial change that cross places, territories, and scales and are accelerated by urban transformation) rather need to be seen as changed conditions for all landscapes and territories (Brenner 2013, 96).

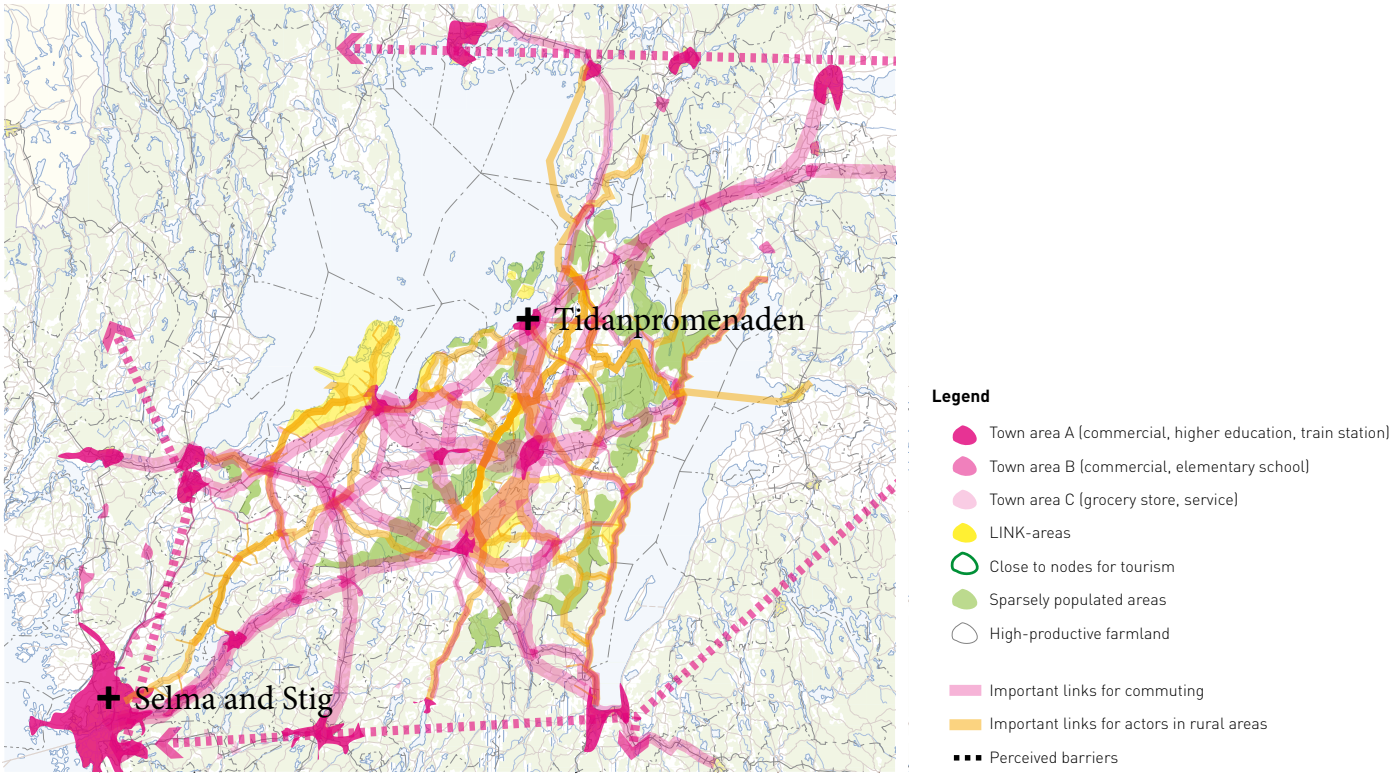
These challenges point toward a need for methodological and theoretical frameworks that can reveal structural discursive processes of urban and economic domination and through which specific knowledge about both concentrating and extending processes of urbanization that surround a specific site can be developed (Brenner 2013, 95).

Two Conceptual Tools: Urban Ecologies and Key Projects

To answer this call for new frameworks, two conceptual tools have been developed to renegotiate relationships between center and periphery and links between nature and society. The research is developed through ongoing design-based research on regional development in West Sweden, Gothenburg (Selma and Stig) and Mariestad (Tidanpromenaden). These local-regional contexts have provided access to a broad spectrum of landscape categories and ongoing urbanization processes (▶1).

The first conceptual tool, urban ecologies, is defined as *complex productive configurations*. Ecologies are characterized by non-linear relations between cause and reaction and stress the urban landscape as overlaid material and discursive configurations that produce possibilities and constrain potential and resources for human society and individuals (Guattari 1989; DeLanda 2006). To clarify the capacity of urban ecologies, both the involved components and the processes that keep them together need to be studied. An important refer-

1
Map of Skaraborg, West Sweden



ence for how urban ecologies are used in this research is Rayner Banham's (1971) study of the development of Los Angeles as an interplay between four ecologies, which based on overlaid infrastructures, climate, and topographies establish preconditions for urbanization processes as well as the forms and functions of architecture and buildings. Banham's work emphasizes how the urban landscape as human habitat combines natural and cultural resources in spatial processes (Banham 1971, 117–121). The concept of urban ecologies is also based on complex and adaptive (eco-) systems where included components continuously respond to change as stated by C. S. Holling (2001). On the other hand, the concept also considers intentional changes of human habitat from the scale of individual decisions to comprehensive global policies. This continuous renegotiation of sense-making relationships constitutes urban ecologies as complex *productive* configurations that produce and reproduce potential for the urban landscape to evolve and thereby to revalue, inscribe, or move fragile situations in hierarchical structures. This approach opens new perspectives in the planning process of local and regional resources and sense-making relationships. Hence, urban ecologies are constitutively defined from what they produce rather than, nominally, as what they are. In the empirical work described in this text, urban ecologies have been used to: A) make visible the interplay between, among others, cultural, biological, and material processes; B) establish configurations of components, flows, and relations; and C) enable or constrain potentials in resources. Urban ecologies have in this way been used to make visible a manifold of centralities in the local-regional map and supported renegotiation of regional imbalances.

The second conceptual tool, key projects, is developed as an adapter to combine resources from different urban ecologies and to identify specific interventions that can start, block, or change the direction of a transformational process. The key "part" of the concept points towards the capacity to open or lock a transformational process and also the need for site-specific understanding; a key has to fit the specific lock to serve a purpose. A generic key is not effective in an uneven, differentiated urban landscape. *Project* is used with regards to its *projective* capacity, i.e., that the architectural project is a tool to assemble relevant knowledge and give it coherent form so that it can be discussed among various stakeholders and suggest a direction for transformational processes. Such conceptualization of a project is always inscribed in a continuous process of transformation where a singular action may have far-reaching impact in both space and time. Thus, the single project is never autonomous but part of larger urban systems.

Thus, key projects are a means to manage the step-by-step transformation of fragile urban landscapes and provide an operative method to handle pragmatic planning situations. Accordingly, they are not defined through what they are, but through what they can achieve, how they operate in decision-making, and what processes they open or lock, i.e., their *key-project-capacity* should include the ability to: 1) Operate a mapping process (topographic, topologic and relational) that can survey and model alternatives as well as include a broader diversity of perspectives on needs and opportunities.

2) Identify, analyze, and influence the spatial processes that maintain, open, and block conditions for urban form. 3) Constitute concrete situation-specific interventions that change the local position and function in networks, effect spatial production of meaning, and establish spatial relations between the urban landscape and the human body. 4) Establish platforms for critical negotiations and set up dialogue to discuss different alternatives for a long-term sustainable development. 5) Form cooperations that gather a diversity of perspectives and relevant actors, and combine available recourses, skills, and mandates to secure actual implementation.

Empirical Contexts

The urban focus that characterizes planning practice within West Sweden catalyzes a competitive approach and risk to make invisible resources that are difficult to transfer to economic values. This especially stresses the need to renegotiate relationships between natural resources and urban development and how local resources can be trans-valued in order to build local development strategies. The empirical projects presented here all have in common that they are situated within or around situations where regional, national, and global economic, political, cultural, and social processes have generated fragile conditions. Key projects are therefore discussed as an approach to combine resources from different urban ecologies in order to materially and discursively transform the local landscape and its position within topological and relational networks.

Selma and Stig, Gothenburg

The Selma Lagerlöf square is a local square surrounded by residential areas, located approximately seven kilometers from the city center of Gothenburg (▶**2**). From a traditional perspective it relates to the city periphery, but in a regional context the area faces the main motorway entrance from the north (road E6), and thus the square, like many places today, relates to at least double and complex center-periphery conditions. The surrounding areas of housing were influenced by rapid expansion in the nineteen-sixties and the nearby highway intersection. Stig center has a characteristic layout with gas stations, fast-food chains, hotels, and various commercial activities.

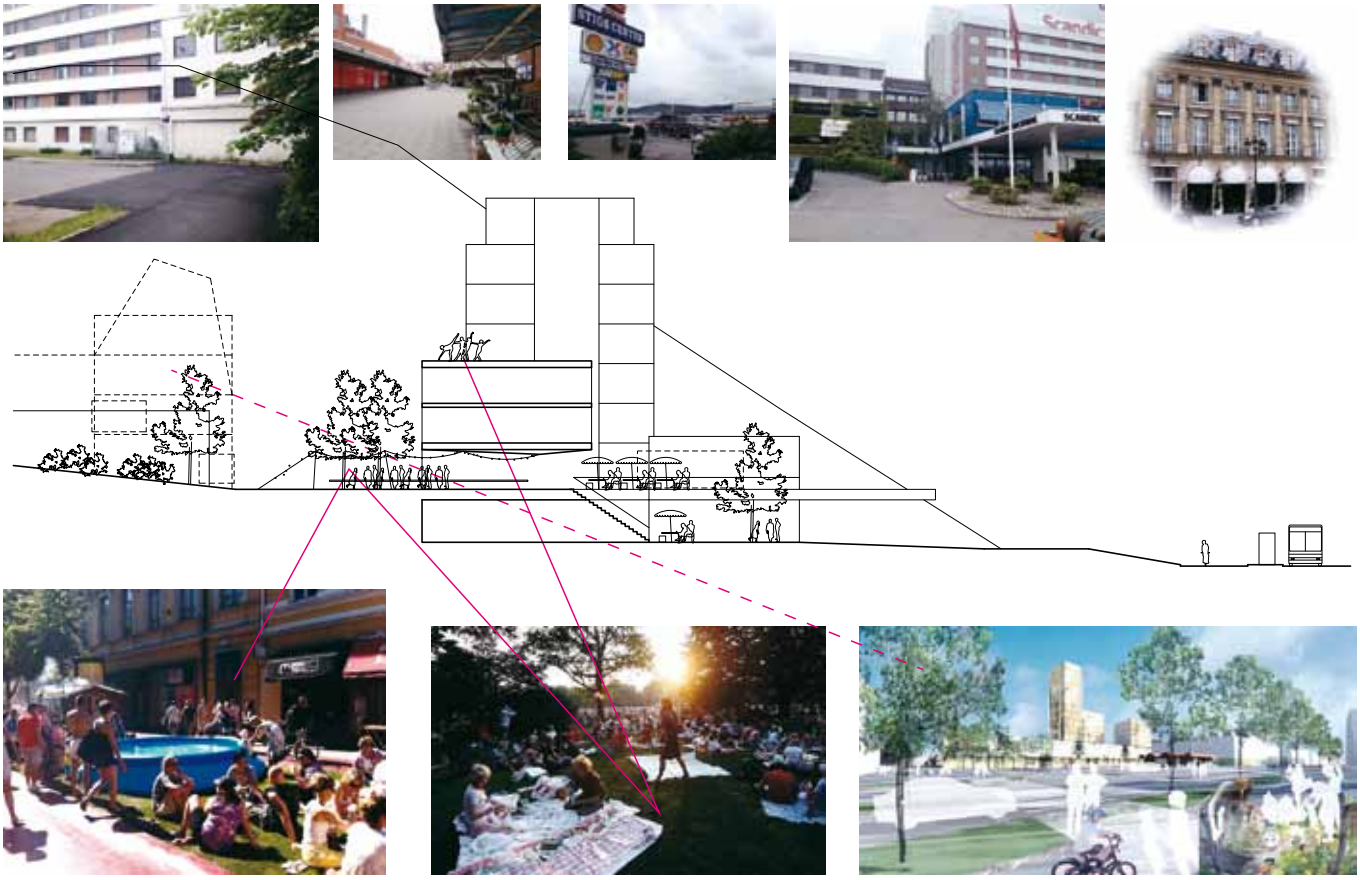
Depending on scale, issue, and perspective the square and the highway intersection can be seen as nodes, either central or peripheral, as part of the local infrastructure branching out from the central city, or as part of the regional urban landscape of Gothenburg. It is important to recognize these possibilities of different identities in order to understand the specific conditions and potentials of the area; these being dependant on perspective articulation and qualities of the topographic and topological landscape change.

The research project started as an invited competition in 2011 on how to regenerate the area around the square. The competition program, formulated by the city administration, presented the square as a "problem area" and asked for strategies to transform it into a dense mixed-use city. This approach made the area's current resources, programs, and inhabitants fragile in relation to

THE SOCIAL TOOLBOX

2
Social Toolbox Selma Lagerlöfs square and Stig center

3
The passage from the local to the regional scale is reopened



future development. The research project instead opted to elaborate strategies based on activating local human and cultural resources. In this process an important approach was to establish the local situation as a centrality in its own right in order to find local resources and potentials hidden under the current vision of the area. An important part of this work was, inspired by Banham, to reveal how a multitude of infrastructural and relational links could be described as different urban ecologies producing potential for different functions, services, and commercial activities. The aim of this approach was to carefully combine potentials and formulate new possibilities for local development in order to sustain existing programs. The proposal was presented as a social toolbox with the ambition to achieve step-by-step densification of buildings, functions, and relations that would feed into the overall revitalization process for the area.

In this process, a hotel was identified as a significant barrier for local development (▶3). The hotel was built in 1971 and included a restaurant, bistro, café, and a gas station. Even if the building mainly serves travelers from the motorway, it turned its common entrance-zone towards both the regional and local ecology, i.e., it had entrances facing both the square and the motorway. However, since the seventies, the hotel has been extended with more rooms and parking and the entrance-zone has been redirected only to the motorway, turning its backside to the residential areas with weak connections to the local context. By reworking the hotel area, its entrances and connections, a meaningful link could be formed between local and regional, and old and new structures. This, rather than "solving all problems," reveals sense-making relationships and structural lock-ins pointing to a more meaningful approach than inserting a stereotype vision of the dense, mixed-use city as the future sustainable solution.

Tidanpromenaden, Mariestad

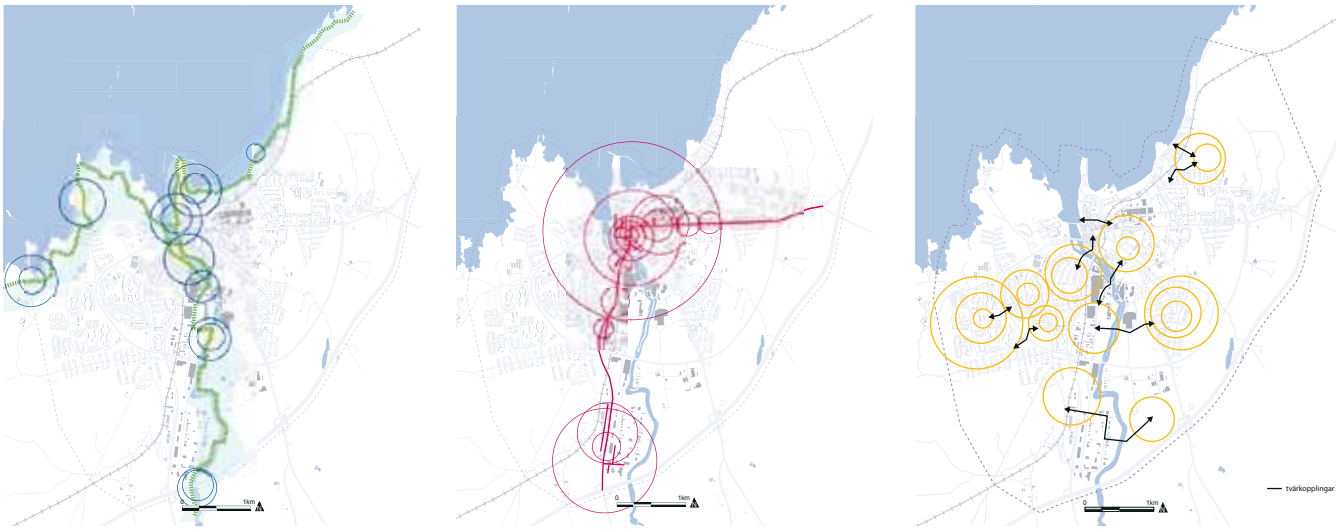
The second empirical project is located in Mariestad, a small town with about 15,000 inhabitants. The research project started with a comprehensive plan for the whole town where the methodologies of key projects and urban ecologies were tested. Mariestad used to be an important local center as a county seat and inland port for regional and national transportation of grain and oil. The main reasons for defining Mariestad as a fragile urban landscape are the topological changes in trade-flows and the shift from being the county capital to a position in the administrative periphery of West Sweden, which affects the notion of what Mariestad is and can be in the future.

Spatial strategies to deal with these issues are expressed in three guiding principles for planning. These principles can also be constituted as ecologies (▶4). They are: "Activate" the shoreline and small river to strengthen public spaces for a diverse spectrum of activities. "Concentrate" functions to stress the need to reformulate how commercial activities locate in the urban landscape and transform the notion of center and periphery related to scale of production- and consumption-units etc. The third principle, "Connect," points to the need to establish new connections in order to reinforce social meeting-places. Together with these main ecologies, the comprehensive

plan also identified fourteen key projects as a road map for further work. For example, in order to open up for commercial development along the main road it needs to be renegotiated as a transit route to a town-street with attached buildings and programs. To activate the river, several small-scale interventions need to be developed in order to connect existing pathways along the river. One of these projects was named Tidanpromenaden (▶5).

Close to where the river runs into the lake, the municipality owns the land along the water but possibilities to move along the river have been restricted by private landowners. Through detailed studies of the area and its historical development, a strategy was designed as a combination of removing a hedge and a private garage, sorting out some easements about parking and land use along with building a staircase and a small bridge. Together with these interventions, the project also demonstrated how local resources and skills could be combined in order to expand its effects on local development. Critical for this part of the project was to establish a collaboration between the municipality, the national center for traditional craftsmanship (located in Mariestad), and local craftsmen. Through this collaboration, the whole design process, as well as the construction of the bridge and staircase, was based on two local oak trees. The trees then shaped the timber used to cover the construction and were used to highlight vital links between nature

4
Main principles for development of Mariestad



– Activate **– Concentrate** **– Connect**

5
Tidanpromenaden, a prototype for combining and trans-value local resources






Trädäck - uteservering
- beskära träd

Ny placering carport
- beskära syrenhäck
- etablera en ny plats (prorotyp 2)

Ny stensatt gång
Syren-"tunnel"

Ny ramp och brygga (prototyp 1)
- Ny stensatt ram + stödmur
- plank och sittbänk
- brygga över magasinsgatan

Ny stensatt gång
- beskära syrenhäck
- Flytta bef. planteringar

Nytt bryggdäck (prototyp 3)

Ny stensatt gång
- återställa stenskoning
- plantering
- fiskebänk
- utekök (prototyp 4)

Ny gatu- och linjemålning
- flytta parkeringar

and society and urban and rural by elaborating the connection between the construction of the passage and the loss of biological, cultural, and aesthetic values in relation to the trees. The project thereby expanded its key capacity both because it elaborates the relationship between local resources and local development and because it is the first example where the municipality and the craftsmanship center collaborated throughout the whole design process. In this respect, the project will serve as a prototype for collaborations in future projects along the river.

Conclusion

The projects presented here have been used to identify and activate urban ecologies as productive configurations that open or block possibilities for developing human habitat. But the challenges posed by fragile urban landscapes also need to be addressed from a structural level. It is important here to emphasize the need to renegotiate relationships between different categories of (urban) landscapes, to bridge polarization between center and periphery in a local and regional context, and to articulate plural and diverse centralities. The main problem with scarcity of resources in fragile urban landscapes is not the scarcity of resources itself but rather that existing resources in many situations need to be trans-valued in order to be visible. This goes for both the ecosystem-based resources and human resources in relation to the people living in different areas.

The key project has been used within these projects to elaborate ideas about how ecologies that condition different programs and functions can be combined in new ways in order to use their different potentials to deal with related urban issues. Urban transformation needs to build on different perspectives of centrality, grow as individual processes, and find solutions and sometimes small interventions that can clarify and open conflicting spatial situations. A key project, or a series of key projects, should not be seen as an isolated project. It is rather how they can trigger potential in the local context and point toward important issues in the planning process that is the key project capacity.

Crucial for the process to work with key projects and urban ecologies are mechanisms that can combine situation-specific planning and implementation in order to gradually activate, make visible, and reshape the substantial planning conditions as well as the discourses that accompany them. In these processes, different sense-making relations can be revealed, not as a mere background or periphery to dominating centralities, but as supplementing parts in a common urban landscape of planetary urbanization.

The empirical work has shown that key projects can unravel and limit overall change from onset of mandates and available resources in order to identify incremental implementation strategies. It is thus important that key projects can constitute critical negotiations and establish dialogue and collaborations that support the desired transformation. To pursue the work with key projects and urban ecologies, planning needs structures that promote ideas, mapping, strategies, and negotiation rather than regulating through the issuing of plans.

Through the iterating movement between practice and theory, the research has gradually extended, clarified, and tackled the matter of what key projects together with urban ecologies can and should be able to do in order to be useful in the planning process. At the same time, this both requires and gives an extended perspective on what the urban landscape is and can be. Underlying economic, technical, cultural, and political processes among others interact to form the urban landscape and vice versa that both make possible and limit development. Key projects and urban ecologies can form operative tools here that support planning by complementing issues of what and where to transform with answers on how this can be made.

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Academy of Future Rural Spaces in Lower Saxony

Verena Schmidt, Dirk Neumann, Olaf Mumm, Yeon Wha Hong, Marie Bruun Yde, Vanessa Miriam Carlow

In 2014, the Institute for Sustainable Urbanism (ISU) initiated the project Academy of Future Rural Spaces in Lower Saxony, funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and teach4TU of TU Braunschweig. The Academy was conceived as a collaborative and transdisciplinary design studio that connected fifteen students of Architecture and Sustainable Design with municipal representatives and citizens of villages and small towns in Lower Saxony. The objective was to jointly analyze problems and potentials in rural areas and to develop ideas for the future of each village or small town in the context of its region. Rural spaces are highly relevant in the federal country of Lower Saxony where almost forty-six percent of the population lives in villages and small towns in a rural landscape setting and only nineteen percent lives in cities. This means that in Lower Saxony, rural areas are of great importance as the living space for a majority of people and, therefore, they face special challenges and potentials with regard to their future development.

The Academy of Future Rural Spaces was one outcome of the "Open Call" that ISU launched after it was founded in 2012 (see The Relevance of Thinking Rural). In the Open Call, we offered to partner with municipalities, cities, and NGOs worldwide. A large number of villages and small towns in Lower Saxony responded. Interestingly, some showed similar and much expected developmental patterns like vacancy, shrinkage, and a loss of public infrastructures like school and libraries. But to our surprise, some of the villages were thriving, increasing in population, densifying, being economically vibrant, and demonstrating a strong civic society.

As a first step into the Academy of Future Rural Spaces, we analyzed the physical system of landscapes, the built and unbuilt spaces that characterize the urban-rural system. The mappings at the scale of Lower Saxony revealed to us a set of interesting dynamics overlaying and changing rural space. The maps represent the new and existing roles usually ascribed to rural areas, such as food and energy production, but also waste disposal, ecological compensation areas, and recreation landscapes. We also saw that Lower Saxony—a so-called *Flächenland*, a term usually describing a system of cities, towns, and villages set in a rural landscape matrix—is physically transforming by industrializing and automatizing agriculture, and by the changes in energy production as wind turbines, biogas, and photovoltaic systems today characterize large tracts of the landscape. Also, the disposal of urban waste is mainly located around rural areas and is not to be underestimated in terms of the massive footprint it leaves behind. In particular, the storage and disposal of radioactive waste takes place in rural areas of Lower Saxony. But also extraction sites are a trademark of the landscape today, as are large factories for building materials (▶**1, 2, 3**).

The maps also illustrate a massive expansion of the settlement carpet, even though the overall population development is negative. Along with the expansion of the settlement carpet, transport infrastructures, and roads and highways in particular, are being expanded as well, in order to accommodate increasing traffic intensities and different regional commuter movements. We also discovered a significant increase of forest and recreation areas in Lower Saxony (▶**4, 5**).

When we zoom in for a closer look at different areas across Lower Saxony we detected diametrically opposed development trends. Economically prosperous regions, such as the agriculturally dominated Oldenburger Münsterland, coexist next to structurally weak areas such as Weserbergland and Harz, where many communities are severely affected by shrinkage as a result of demographic change. The rural landscape, in fact, is as multifaceted as the urban is.

After this desk-based research about Lower Saxony, we invited actors from five villages and small towns who had responded to the open call to collaborate with us: Samtgemeinde Barnstorf, Samtgemeinde Bersenbrück, Flecken Brome, Gemeinde Vechelde and Wolfshagen (Harz), a district of the city of Langelsheim. The municipalities were not only chosen because their representatives showed a high level of interest in cooperating with us, but also because they represented a cross-section of phenomena we had discovered in the mappings (▶**6**).

The cooperative work started with a meeting at ISU, where actors from all five communities came together. Those actors included mayors, the chief planners, and citizens. After each group presented their community, we discussed starting points, issues, and possible forms of cooperation. Both structurally similar and specific issues, challenges, and opportunities were detected. The results were included in the assignment for the design studio that was carried out during the following summer of 2015 (▶**7, 8**).

Before the students went on field trips to all five communities in May 2015, they familiarized themselves with the communities by producing comparable maps for each

of them based on four themes: networks and mobility, building development (not to speak of urbanization) and public spaces, production and cultural landscapes, and nature and recreation. Therefore, spatial data (geodata) provided by the municipalities and the federal country, as well as openly accessible data, were identified on the four themes and visualized through cartographic implementation. As a result, a number of intuitively understandable maps were created, which formed the basis for further analysis and discussion between the students and the practice partners.

Through the maps, students presented information about the study sites not only to each other, but also to the representatives of the five communities. This step, in particular, was relevant to foster a strong dialogue between our practice partners, citizens, and students because in those discussions the students found out whether their spatial analysis would match the daily experience of the local people. In this way, the students and the local partners entered into a direct exchange, asking questions and exchanging opinions. This combination of academic training and practice was an important element of the academy.

Also, several times during the following design process, the students presented their concepts and project ideas to the representatives of each municipality. In joint discussions, both sides benefited from mutual learning effects. The students used the critical feedback to further their projects. The community partners could complete their perspectives with the help of an analytical view from outside. They were provided with ideas of how to develop their municipality well into the future.

Based on their analysis and the workshop results, the students developed architectural designs, scenarios, and development concepts for all five municipalities. The challenge for the students was to develop a design concept grounded in a specific local context, and at the same time to embed the concept in overarching strategies or scenarios for rural areas of Lower Saxony. The range of subjects the students discovered and developed was astonishingly wide. In particular, in combining several of the approaches, we believe there is a huge potential for developing the rural municipalities in a more sustainable and resource-saving way. Below, representative observations and selected student works are presented.

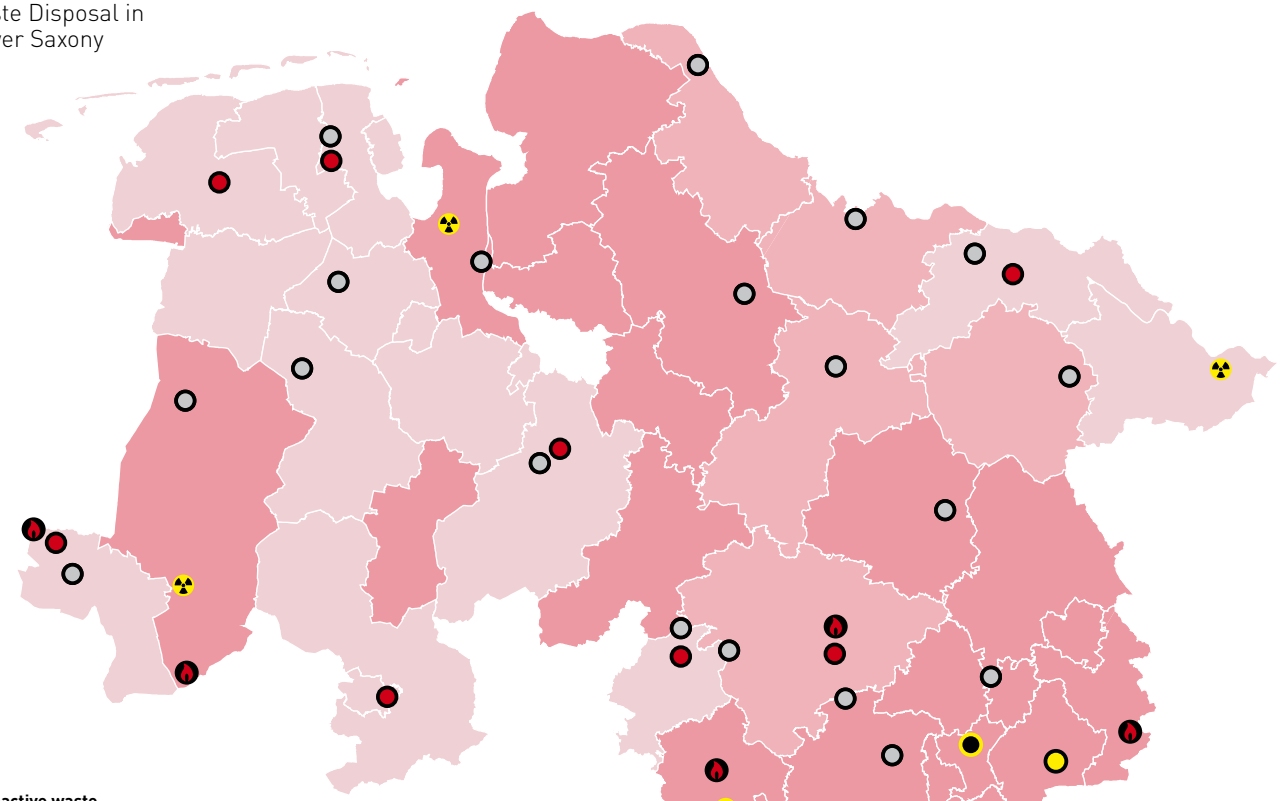
Vechelde

Vechelde is booming. In particular, because of its proximity to the thriving university city of Braunschweig and industrial strongholds such as Wolfsburg at commuter distance, there is a high demand for housing. The municipality of Vechelde is actually a composite of seventeen villages. In the main village, where the train station is also located, the municipality has become accustomed to developing low-density housing plot by plot, until which point the boundaries of the landscape protection area will eventually be reached. Compared to that, the smaller villages of the municipality are in a more disadvantaged position. The provision of public transport is insufficient. Furthermore, due to the relatively small amount of inhabitants, the function of local schools and childcare facilities is threatened, along with other infrastructure such as local shops. Therefore, it was important to

1
Urban-rural landscapes:
Industrial complexes...

2
...and slag deposit
mountains near Hanover

3
Waste Disposal in
Lower Saxony



Radioactive waste

Intermediate storage for radioactive waste

Terminal storage for radioactive waste (under construction)

Terminal storage for radioactive waste (closing)

Household and industrial waste

Waste incineration plant (MVA)

Waste disposal site

Bio-mechanical treatment (MBA)

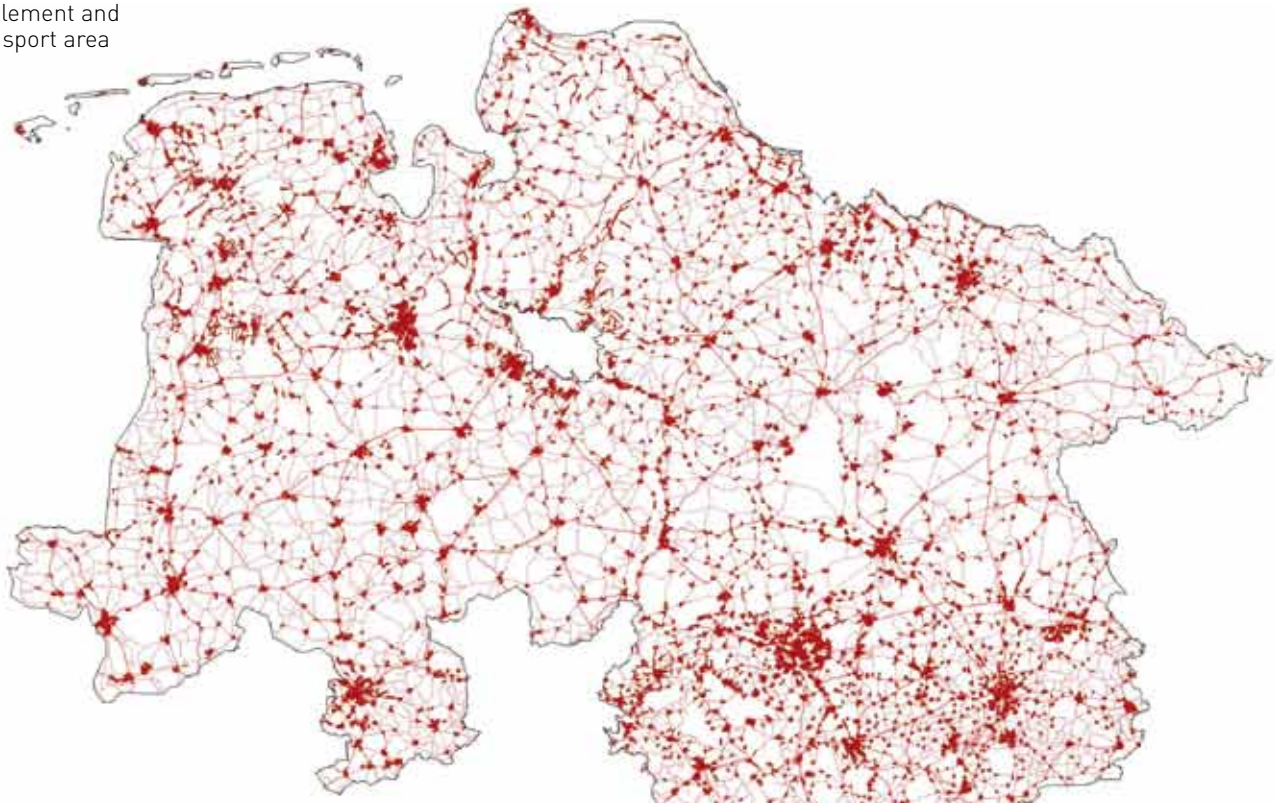
Catchment area

Area of waste disposal (MVA)

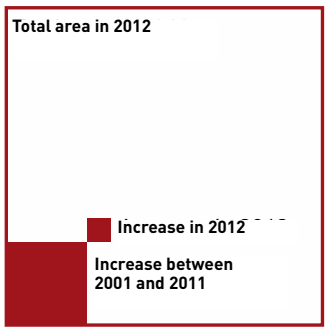
Area of waste disposal (MVA/MBA)

Area of waste disposal (MBA)

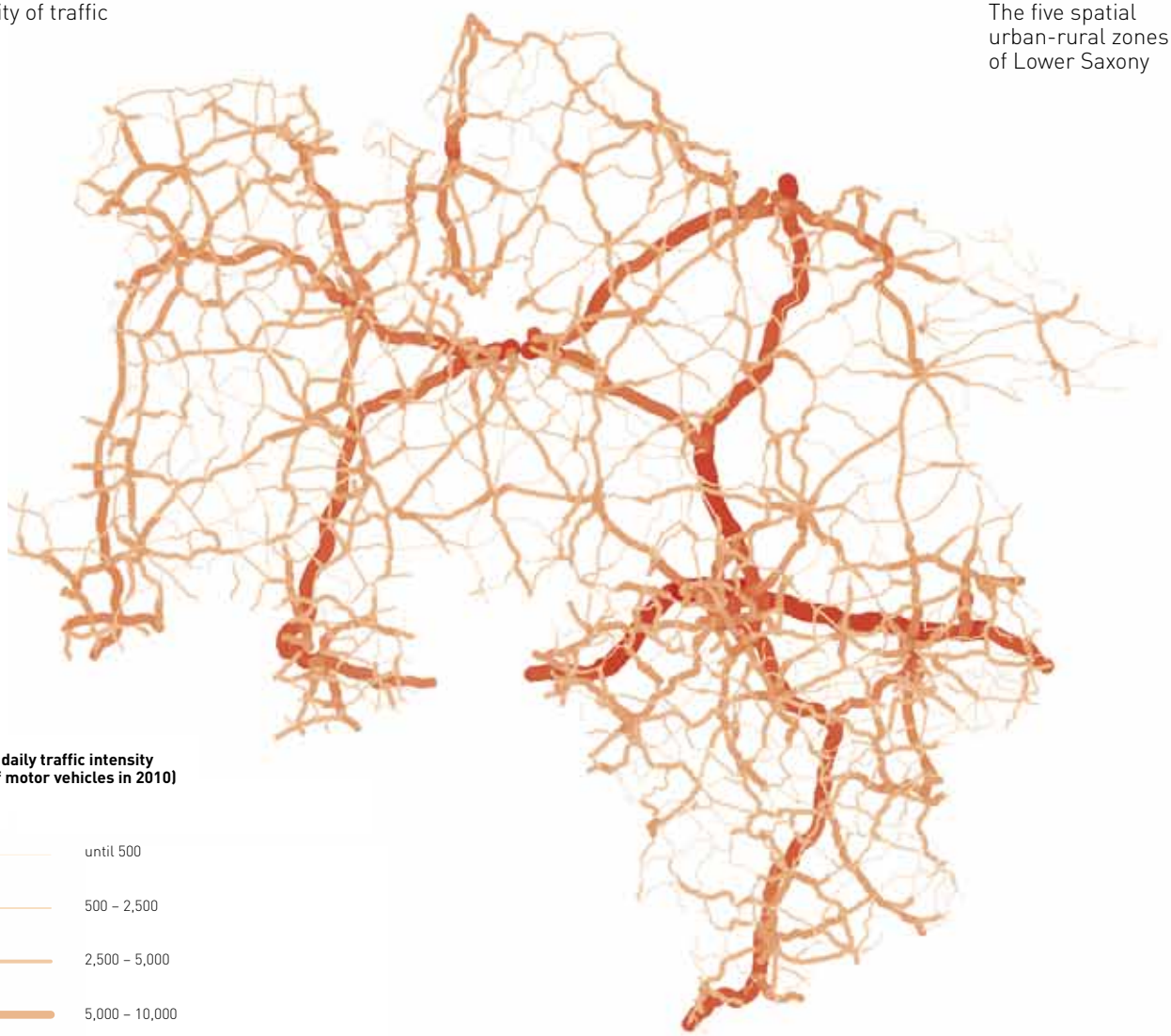
4
Settlement and transport area



Increase of the settlement and transport area in relation to the total settlement and transport area



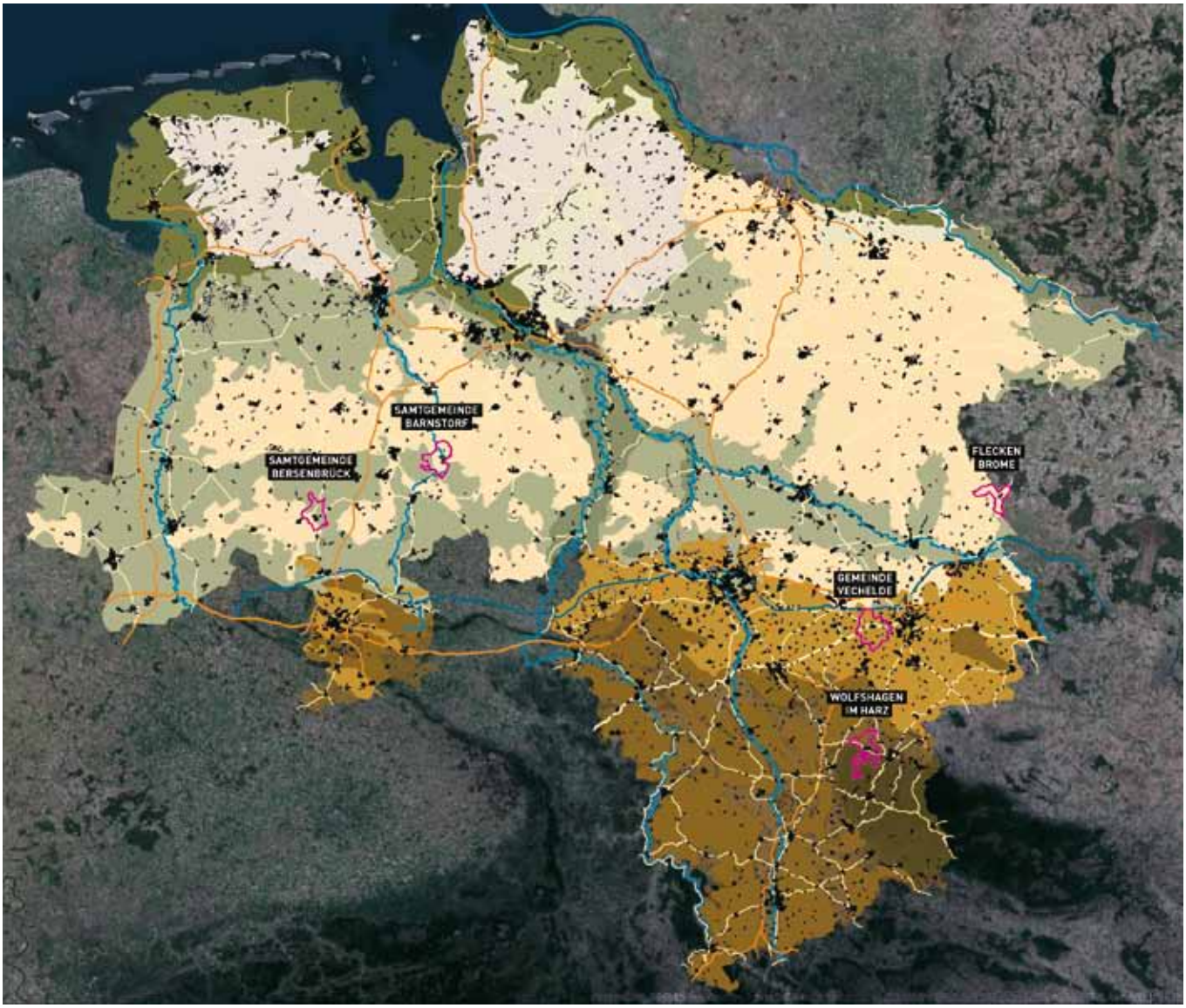
5
Intensity of traffic



Average daily traffic intensity (count of motor vehicles in 2010)

- until 500
- 500 – 2,500
- 2,500 – 5,000
- 5,000 – 10,000
- 10,000 – 20,000
- 20,000 – 35,000
- 35,000 – 50,000
- 50,000 – 75,000
- 75,000- 100,000
- over 100,000

6
The five spatial urban-rural zones of Lower Saxony


SAMTGEMEINDE
BARNSTORF
SAMTGEMEINDE
BERSENBRÜCK
FLECKEN
BROME
GEMEINDE
VECHELDE
WOLFSHAGEN
IM HARZ

7
Transdisciplinary workshop with students and municipality representatives in Barnstorf

8
Site visit with mayor, students and citizens in Brome

describe a developmental strategy for all of the seventeen villages that form the municipality of Vechelde.
The project "Urban Living in Green Surroundings" by Goran Rebić tackles that question. The student accepts the overall high demand for housing in Vechelde as a starting point for his research on how to deal with the opportunities and limits to growth. Based on the physical borders of today's villages, the student drew a red contour line defining and limiting the areas for possible new developments. Within this contour, smaller villages grow together along their connecting roads to form a "critical mass." The arising typology of street villages is a challenge for their organization, but also an exaggerated reinterpretation of the existing situation. Outside the contour, landscape features such as forests, water, meadows, and agricultural land are preserved. This scenario is intended to stimulate new thinking and long-range strategies: How urban are rural areas? How can urban sprawl and land sealing be reduced by intensifying villages and limiting the space dedicated as building land?

Brome

Brome is situated on the former inner German border, nearby Wolfsburg. In its function as a basic center (*Grundzentrum*), as defined in the spatial structure plan (*Landesraumordnungsprogramm*), Brome is supposed to cover not only the retail needs of its own residents, but also that of adjoining municipalities. Given the size of the village itself, Brome displays an amazing number of large retail units! These are intensely used by commuters from the neighboring federal country of Saxony-Anhalt, where legislation on the building of large retail units is more restrictive. While at the edge of the settlement even more retail space in the form of supermarkets will be developed, the old center is increasingly affected by vacancy and through-going traffic. How can the public space be re-enabled as the civic center for the local people, and how can the historic building and spatial structures along the main road be revitalized and developed?
The project "Street Workshop" by Lukas Atas and Kristijonas Nenartavičius deals with those vital questions by "provoking" the local residents with an architectural intervention. With a participatory workshop in Brome, the two exchange students from Lithuania put their ideas into practice. Together with citizens, a bench was designed and built. The bench was put next to the church, facing an empty and decaying historic building of which Brome has so many. The aim to enable the public space and to launch a debate about the future development of the village—in particular, the question of how to deal with vacant old buildings along the main street—was achieved throughout the days the installation was in place. We found that selective impulses in public space can encourage the realization of further actions—also from private initiatives (▶9).
Also, Ruben Michaelis was much impressed by the degree of decay on the village's main road, which initially triggered the municipality to contact ISU. With his project "Between Main Road and Ohre," the student deals with the recent demolition of a building that belonged to a row of detached houses along the street. Instead of closing the building gap, the student proposed a

structure that utilized the extreme depth of the building plot between the road and the village's river Ohre. The derelict building along the road is covered by a simple roof and dedicated to publicly accessible functions, such as a practice for a traveling doctor or a market. In the back of the plot, staggered buildings provide spaces for housing that benefit from the view of the landscape and are shielded from the noise of the road. This principle can be translated to most plots in the core of the village. This highly specific architectural project proposes a future in which the historic core of the beautiful village is revitalized and the dedication of new building land at its edge put to a stop (▶11).

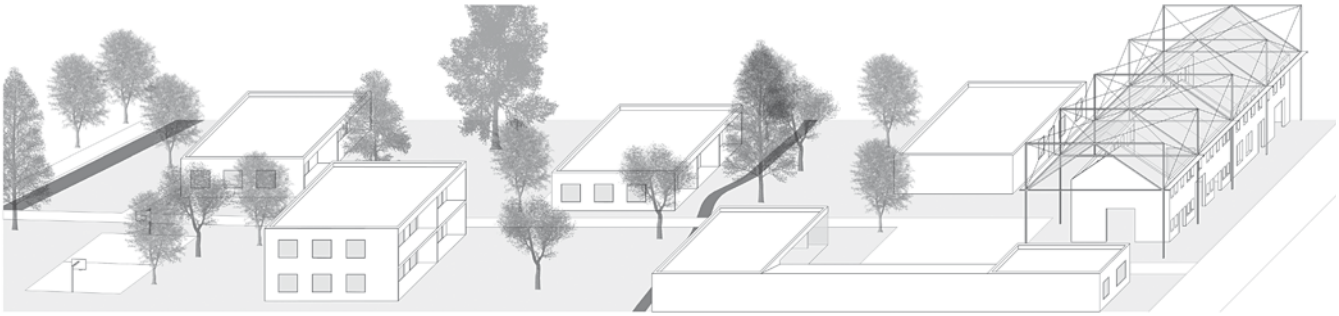
Wolfshagen (Harz)

Wolfshagen is a village in the picturesque Harz mountains. From an administrative point of view, Wolfshagen belongs to the city of Langelsheim, which lies at quite a distance. Wolfshagen is severely affected by a loss of population, in particular young people, and the increasing vacancy in the core of the village. The dissolution of some shops and social facilities could be temporarily avoided by the engagement of a highly energetic civic society, and in particular the citizens' organization of "Wolfshagen 2030," who contacted us initially.
Due to their continued efforts, it was, for example, possible to maintain the operation of the municipal outdoor swimming pool that greatly fosters the social cohesion and livability of the community, and also adds to the attractiveness of the area as a tourist destination, which the local community considers as one of their main economic assets. As an approved health resort, the village has 60,000 overnight stays per year. Thus, the number of visitors actually outnumbers the 2,350 villagers by many times.
The village of Wolfshagen faces the challenge of how tourism can be developed in a sustainable way and how to deal with population decline. In fact, the main goal for the local people in participating in the Academy of Future Rural Spaces was to come to new concepts for the sustainable development of the village based on local values and culture. Could vacant buildings be reused or is it about thinking ahead and to integrate shrinkage in the development process?
These are the questions that the project "Oasis" by Karla Sršen and Bruna Stipaničić addresses. The two students were on exchange from Croatia. Much impressed by the landscape, the two students interpreted Wolfshagen as a retreat and natural oasis in the Harz mountains.
In that context, a scenario of a gradual shrinkage is positive since it will consolidate the historic core of the village in its immediate connection with the natural landscape of creeks, mountains, forests, and meadows. Therefore, underused or vacant spaces at the edge of the village will be gradually transformed to be given back to nature. The released land may be used in the future as green areas for tourism or as habitats for animals, such as the local species of cattle, the Harzer Höhenvieh. As a result, the students developed a highly site-specific approach for sustainable tourism, which integrates both features of the local flora and fauna and natural spatial structures (▶12).

9
Urban intervention at
Brome's main street

10
Students invite citizens to design and build a bench together and to start a discourse about village development and revitalization.

11
Revitalization of Brome's center: Renovations and new construction activate the area around main street and the Ohre creek



Bersenbrück

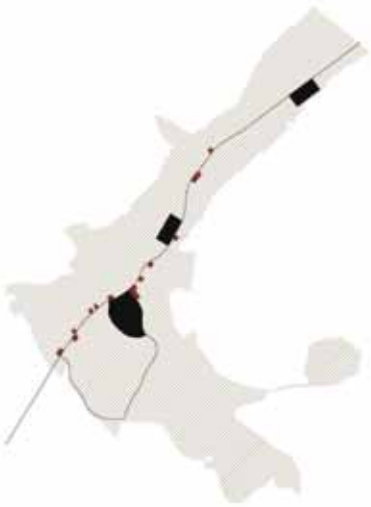
While Wolfshagen is struggling with shrinkage, Bersenbrück is confronted with the opposite—high development pressure. Furthermore, agricultural production is thriving in the municipality. The municipality presents itself as a dense production and cultural landscape. The so called Niedersachsenpark, an intercommunal business park, is planned to be one of the biggest commercial zones in the whole of Lower Saxony. Agriculture, energy production, the need for housing, and the recreational and tourism sector are therefore competing for the same land resources. Further population growth is forecast and the development of infrastructure and housing is necessary. Accordingly, a development strategy on the larger scale of the region is much required.
The project "Sensitive Landscape" by Tomi Šoletić addresses this issue. The student from Croatia addresses the limited resource of land in the municipality of Bersenbrück. Infrastructure and built-up areas are concentrated along two axes connecting Bersenbrück with the region. In response to the high demand of land for animal farming, a skyscraper typology is proposed, where stables are stacked and where manure is used to produce energy. This scenario is intended to stimulate thinking about future forms of hyper-effective and sustainable production landscapes. Even though both proposals remind us much of Belgian and Dutch precedents by XDGA and MVRDV, their translation into the context of Bersenbrück seemed promising (▶13).

Barnstorf

In 2009, the municipality of Barnstorf together with their citizens adopted a resolution for sustainable land management following the paradigm of inner densification translated to a village (*Innenentwicklung vor Außenentwicklung*). Since then, the village's political administration puts an effort to cover the demand for new housing or other necessary infrastructure within the existing settlement pattern by converting or densifying the use of land. One example is the conversion of former barracks into a small business park. In response to the aging of residents, age-based housing and barrier-free public places are developed. The river Hunte, flowing through the village, is a far under-utilized potential place for recreation and for connecting the surrounding landscapes that the municipality seeks to better exploit.
Daniela Eichinger's project "Barnstorf Garden Courtyards" fits well into that strategy, since it builds on Barnstorfs planning attitude of land-saving development. After a careful analysis of areas that could still be densified through the village, Daniela Eichinger proposes a differentiated functional mix for all of the empty sites. At strategic locations, empty sites are enriched with social functions (for example, community gardens and sports, etc.) and the sites become new meeting places for the local community. By the densification of free lots, the author proposes land-saving housing typologies with communal gardens (for example, housing for multiple generations), which replace the "dominance" of single-family houses.

12
Designing the process of de-growth: Wolfshagen (Harz) turns into a green "Oasis."

2015. Current situation:
potentials for redeveloping the main street



2020. Concentration of public buildings at the main street, activation of ground floors, social/collective housing

2025. Development of the bike rental station, connecting into the recreational network of Harz

2015. Current situation:
abandoned houses, potential for reuse

2035. Grassland and forest are entering more and more, and occupy some recently abandoned houses.

2045. Grassland and forest are merging with the village, reinvention of rural and natural infrastructure.

Conclusions: Potentials of the Cooperation

The Academy of Future Rural Spaces was a great experience for everyone involved. Both students and the representatives of the municipalities enjoyed their exchange—and we were happy to be the brokers of that exchange. For us, it was fascinating to see how seriously the students considered the local people's needs and thoughts—and how very seriously, on the other hand, the professionals took the students' proposals, especially the bolder ones.

Furthermore, the students' fresh ideas triggered an intensive exchange among the people in the villages, and also among the municipalities. Some villages were great at using the academy to promote a public discourse on the challenges and opportunities their communities do face.

The transfer of knowledge and experience between local actors and academics is an essential element in the cooperation and opens up a great potential for partnership. In this way, the often pragmatic but promising everyday planning of municipalities meets knowledge-based analytical methods developed at the university and the more visionary planning approaches of the students. Just bringing together and reconciling these two approaches can add value for both the municipalities and the university.

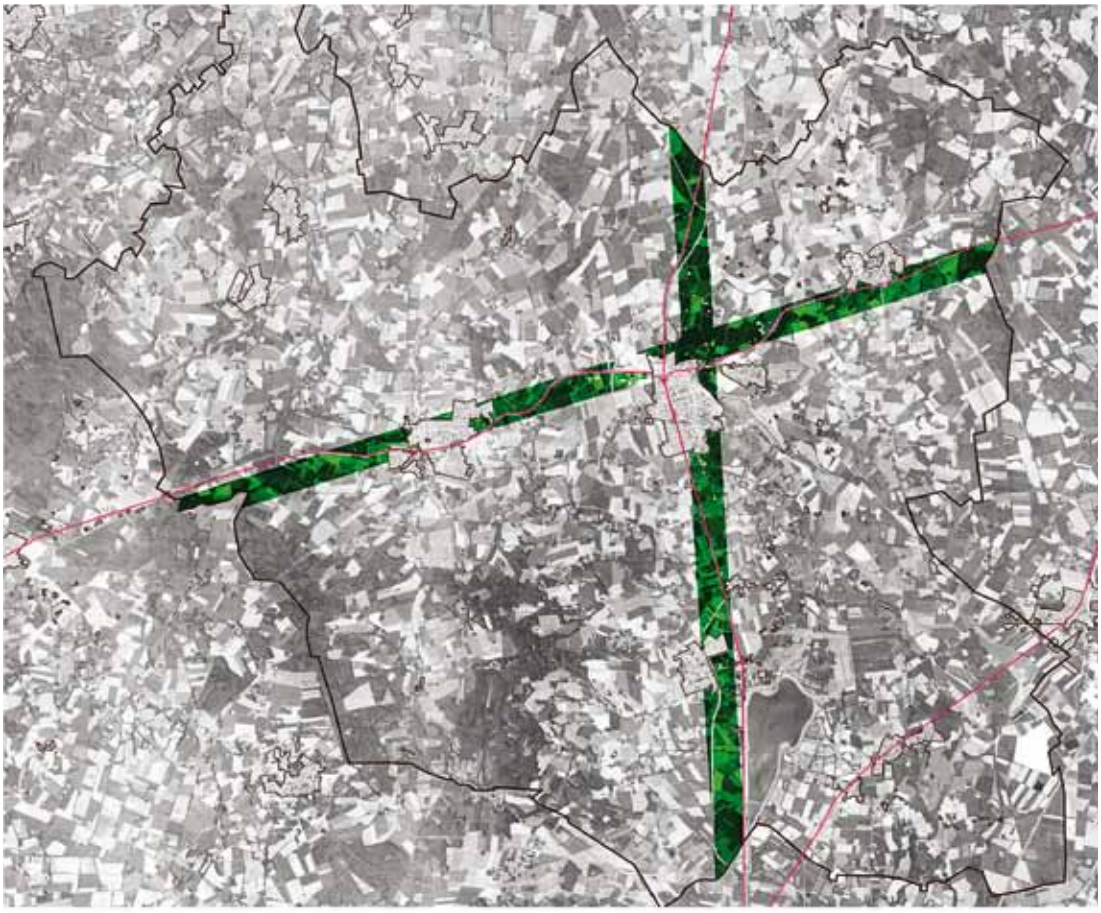
Un-similar Similarities

Most importantly, the Academy of Future Rural Spaces has shown that rural municipalities of Lower Saxony have very distinct characteristics and, therefore, their own challenges. On the other hand, structurally similar trends and issues were exposed: rural spaces thus show un-similar similarities. To give some examples, all municipalities have to deal with "grand" societal challenges such as demography, new refugees, structural changes in the supply and development of local buildings and infrastructure, and also with deficits in the provision of public transport and facilities, or resources in general. It seems that many rural spaces have to solve similar questions that cities have to tackle. And as with cities, the level of prosperity in the community or in the region has a significant impact on the development opportunities a village or a small town has.

Participation and Civic Involvement as Motor for Development in Rural Areas

The small size of the villages and small towns seems to have a very positive effect on the implementation of projects. New themes and ideas can easily be introduced and discussed in small groups. Flat hierarchies and decision-making structures are helping to realize creative strategies. Particularly, active citizenship and personal networks are much more effective than they are at the scale of a large city—at least that's what many of the villagers brought forward in our discussions. Is this a mere stereotype of thinking about rural spaces? Nonetheless, through citizens' involvement, communities like Barnstorf and Wolfshagen (Harz) brought empty sites or facilities threatened by vacancy back into use. There is an equally large interest of citizens to get involved in the design of their villages and small towns as there is in larger cities.

13
Regional transformation around Bersenbrück: The concentration of settlements along two infrastructure axes allows to create a hyper-productive and sustainable landscape.



Regional Strategies Based on Local Visions

In dialogue with the community representatives, we concluded that a local and solution-oriented planning approach should be pursued. This reflects the hands-on attitude the villages presented to us. However, a culture of inter-communal cooperation is paramount and must be fostered, even though this often turns out to be rather difficult. Joint municipal development concepts can work with collective strengths to promote regional identity and culture. Especially the development of long-term visions and strategies in the context of the region offers enormous design freedom for a forward-looking future. Planning the interface between the village and region, however, requires new innovative "rural" design tools, of which we believe the Academy of Future Rural Spaces has discovered some.

Note

The project Academy of Future Rural Spaces was funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, funding code 01PL12043.

GEFÖRDERT VOM

Bundesministerium
für Bildung
und Forschung

teach4TU

The Hike to the Snøhetta: Learning from Landscape

Interview with Patrick Lüth, Snøhetta, Innsbruck

The name of your architectural practice is already programmed to choose a landscape as a company brand. What is Snøhetta?

Snøhetta is a mountain in Norway. It's about halfway between Oslo and Trondheim, in the middle of this southern part of Norway. Snøhetta is not the tallest mountain of Norway, but it's a very mythological mountain that is mentioned in many tales and myths. And it's also the center of gravity of Norway. So if you have a little model of Norway, you could balance Norway on that peak (▶1).

Snøhetta is also a group of people; connected in the name of our architectural practice in Oslo with branches in New York, San Francisco, and Innsbruck, working as architects, landscape architects, interior architects, and since about five years we also have brand designers in our team.

Once a year, both sides come together when we do our annual trip to that mountain; the hike to the Snøhetta. We do this exercise because it's a physical exercise, we spend a lot of hours on this mountain, we spend time together, and we find a lot of inspiration in the landscape. That is actually something that relates us as well in Innsbruck to the office in Oslo. We took the conscious decision of not moving to Vienna or to a larger city, but moving to a rather rural place, the little city of Innsbruck, because this direct relation to landscape is very obvious there.

1
The mountain Snøhetta

You find inspiration in landscape. Could you outline a bit your working methods?

Our office in Oslo is a former garage for snowplows. It's located right at the fjord, which gives us the landscape reference. In this space, about one hundred people work on several projects. We are all equally distributed in this office space. We are not divided up in our teams, we are not divided up in our disciplines, but it's really mixed throughout the workspace. We always have this cross-office communication, where we sometimes even shout across the desks just because it's the easiest way of communicating. One important aspect for Snøhetta has always been and still is communication.

Furthermore, we really try to cultivate a transdisciplinary process, also with external specialists like artists, scientists, and writers. The way we work was actually detected by a scientific group in the book *Idea Work*. They analyze the creative drivers within Snøhetta but also within two other offices who are actually not easily identifiable as creative offices; one is a research institute for geology, and the other one a law firm. This scientific research identifies ten drivers that liberate creativity in collaborative processes. These drivers were used by us, even though it wasn't intentional. Since we have been made aware of them, we utilize them in workshops with clients where we do intentionally utilize these methods to create/co-create ideas and concepts.

How do you approach design projects in general?

As a general rule, we design all projects in design teams that consist of all disciplines and often also external partners. No matter if a project is located in an urban or in a landscape setting, first we try to identify the core purpose of a project. Let's take, for example, Wild Reindeer Pavilion at Dovrefjell, which is this mountain range that looks over to Snøhetta. The core purpose of the Wild Reindeer Pavilion is warmth and shelter. We tried to find references in local landscape topologies, like here, these melting snow formations. We also tried to find references in the *Kunsthandwerk*, in the local craftsmanship, that is traditionally embedded in the culture. We recomposed these ingredients to form our design. In this process, technology plays an important role. One tool that helps us materialize our three-dimensional shapes is the industrial milling robot that is located in the office in Oslo. With this tool, we can create scale models as well as one-to-one mockups. In the case of the reindeer pavilion, the milling files could actually be transferred to the fabricator of the wooden elements.

The geometric shapes that we have used are not unique, but interpretations of the local material with the dry, dowelled wood. With the craftsmanship and with this material, I think they give it a uniqueness and this specificity to the location. And it works really well, it's very well accepted. We hear that regularly people stay overnight in the cabin even though it was not intended for that. It can fit about hundred people, so on our yearly journey to Snøhetta that is now one of our fixed locations that we go to (▶2, 3).

You also speak of artificial landscape when you speak about your projects. What do you mean by this?

I'll take the Opera in Oslo as an example of highly

specific architectures in landscapes. The concept of the Norwegian National Opera and Ballet is actually very easy to describe. In 1999, the Norwegian Government decided that they wanted to mark the change of the Millennium with a cultural architecture project. They set up a budget of about half a billion euros for this project and made a competition. For us, the main question of that competition was how legitimate it was to build a building for half a billion euros where its core content was only interesting to a statistic three to five percent of the population. So we turned it around and decided, first of all we build something for everybody, which can then also serve as an opera building. We built a non-commercial landscape in the center of the city; and most of all, it's a building for the people. And it works: on the roof of the Opera House people spend their spare time, just because the place allows for it. People can go there fly fishing, people can go there just to have a good time, and people do so. In the summer, we have occasions where the whole roof is actually used as an auditorium and where they use pontoons to make stages in front of the Opera House and regularly there are more than 10,000 people on the roof (▶4).

How do you utilize landscape elements in your architecture?

As I mentioned earlier, we like to collaborate with other people who are not exactly in our discipline: for example, for the treatment of the roof of the Opera House we collaborated with three sculptors that helped us to develop the texture of this very large roof of the Opera House. Together we built a model in the scale of 1:20 of the opera roof, it's about six meters wide and eight meters long. On this model, the artists developed those subtle foldings and deformations of the roof. These deformations are necessary to identify the building as landscape, because what they do is they make you aware of your steps, for example, when you walk on the surface. If we just have a tilted plane, it would be a desert. Instead, with those subtle deformations, you first of all add functionality, you add seating possibilities, you guide the way the people walk and make them aware of their physical behaviour on that roof—which in this case relates back to our journey up to Snøhetta, where we have to be aware of our individual steps (▶5).

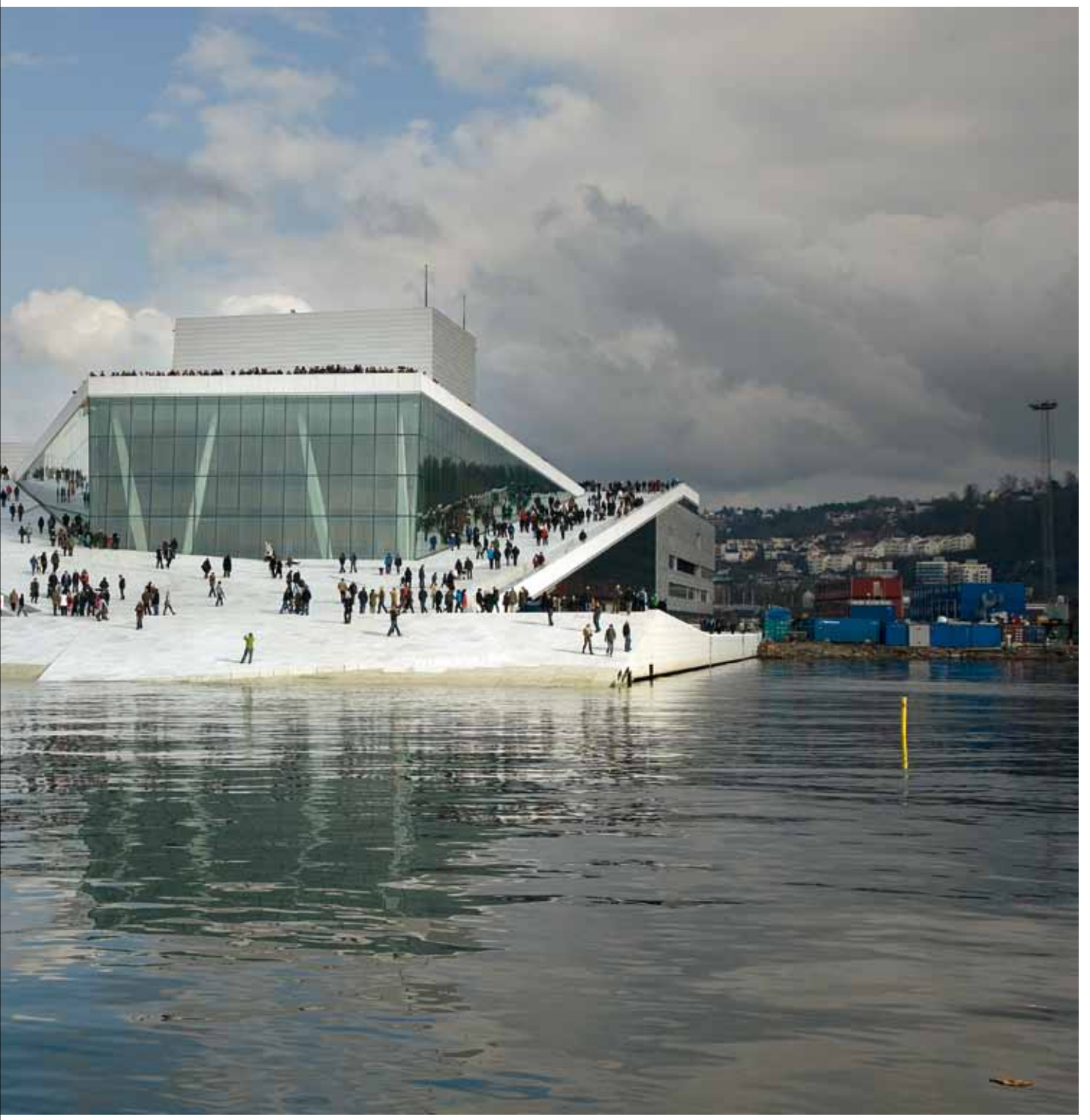
What is Snøhetta's approach to integrated landscape and architecture?

I will explain this with the case of the Petter Dass Museum, which is very landscape specific. It is located in Alstahaug, which is in northern Norway, so it's really off the beaten track and I would not really call it a rural landscape because there is no more agriculture up there, there is only landscape that is not even used for leisure activities. Petter Dass was a writer; he is the most famous Norwegian writer from the seventeenth century and he lived his life in this little town. Alstahaug has a church, three buildings, and a boathouse. The competition brief called for a building of considerable volume on a site right beside the little local church. This placement would have completely destroyed the morphology of the town. So, our idea was to remove a piece of the mountain and instead place the museum inside the rock. By the use of a long cable source, we cut

2
The Norwegian Wild Reindeer Center Pavilion overlooking the mountain Snøhetta

3
The wooden core is shaped like rock or ice that has been eroded by natural forces.

4
Norwegian National Opera and Ballet. The building is as much landscape as architecture and thus fosters public awareness and engagement with the arts.



5
Norwegian National Opera and Ballet. Its accessible roof makes the building a social monument.

out a slit of the bedrock and exposed the naked rock on both sides. In the next step we basically placed the very simple shape of the building inside the rock. So what you get is a really nice relationship between the building and its adjacent landscape. And it keeps the town intact. Furthermore, the museum gives you a very strong focus on the landscape; actually, that is all that is exhibited in this museum. It's the landscape, which inspired Petter Dass to write his poems. The visitor can sit down on the sofas and listen to the church songs and poems that were written by Petter Dass (▶6).

What could be the influence of architecture for small towns?

The town of Wattens, where we have finished a project for Swarovski last year, is in a quiet, rural context and has about 8,500 inhabitants. The CEO of Swarovski has a deep desire to improve the quality of this town. He has commissioned us to create a vision for Wattens, considering what influences Swarovski could have on the future of this town. How could the town of Wattens be improved in the future? After all, Wattens has the main production facility of Swarovski, and provides almost 5,000 jobs.

In this whole context we are realizing that it's quite interesting that there is a direct link between the architect as an enabler, as a communication device I would say, and the commercial client and the way we could have an influence on the development of those rural urban spaces. Another commercial client in the town of Dornbirn in western Austria has addressed us with a very similar task because they are actually interested in relocating their headquarters. It's a quite large company, acting globally. They are initially from Dornbirn but have been considering moving their headquarters to London or Amsterdam. After an analysis of their current location, we found out that the best strategy would be to stay in Dornbirn: to really embed their headquarters in the existing, let's say semi-urban texture of Dornbirn with all the benefits they could get out of it. Especially the heritage aspect of this old family business—here the first items of the company were produced—that nowadays looks back on a very successful history.

So, again it is a situation where a commercial client is trying to improve their situation by connecting to a heritage that is embedded in the landscape—I would call it a rural urban landscape—with Wattens consisting of 8,500 and Dornbirn of 40,000 inhabitants. Both are no big urban spaces but they have the possibility together with the commercial clients to enhance this space to a public situation that is strongly influenced by a corporate architecture and a corporate design of the client. We think there is a lot of potential in these situations.

What role do villages and smaller towns have in a world in which the majority lives in cities? Could you comment on and describe a bit the situation in Austria or the other countries you have been working in?

Even if the percentage of people living in urban agglomerations is still rising, we must not forget that there is a large part of the population that lives in rural areas. Therefore, also we architects and urban planners must not forget to think about those areas. There is a lot of interest in urbanism, but ruralism is often left aside.

6
Petter Dass Museum. Snøhetta decided to make a cut in the landscape, creating space for a freestanding building, which, in volume added, balances the mass removed.

In our experience, the administration in rural areas is often overwhelmed with the complexity that comes with their tasks. Even in mid-sized towns with up to 10,000 people, mayors are mostly only employed part-time and don't have any training or experience with global trends and strategies. That's why we feel that we need to find new models of how we can have a positive impact on the development of these areas.

In the current city-centered discourse, rural spaces are often dismissed as declining or stagnating. However, rural spaces also play a critical role in sustainable development, as an inextricably linked counterpart, but also as a complement to the growing city, as extraction sites, natural reservoirs for food, fresh water and air, or as leisure spaces. Do we need to formulate a (new) vision for "ruralism"? What would be your definition of the future rural?

I think the term "vision" is exactly what we need. We as planners need to envisage scenarios that are long term and strive for high goals. That's why we think that participative models can only be one out of a series of strategies. With participative processes, it is often difficult to create images beyond the commonly comprehensible, the mediocre. People don't generally have "visions," they only relate their future to what they already know or are used to. In any case, this vision needs to go beyond exactly what you have been stating above, rural areas can be more than pure providers of the resources you mentioned before. They can be sustainable and attractive living and working environments, as much as cities are.

Ruralism —A Global Perspective

Urbanizing Shanghai's Suburban Farmland

Ruta Randelovic

Since the introduction of the "Open Door Policy," Chinese society has been rapidly transforming in all domains, shifting from an agricultural society to an urban society (Logan 2008). Millions of rural inhabitants are moving to the cities, which inevitably generates changes in the urban landscape as well (Hartog 2010; Song and Ding 2007; White et al. 2008). Opening and integration in the global economy has improved the quality of urban life and cities have progressively gained importance in China's administrative system, further expanding the urbanization process (Zhang 2007; Song and Ding 2007; Zhang 2011; Wu 2007; Campanella 2008).

Agricultural China had only around 10% of its population living in cities at the time of the revolution in 1949. Under a socialist planned economy, the urban population started to grow along with industrial development. This trend is still going on (Zhang 2007). It is estimated that, starting from the nineteen-eighties, around 150 million country-dwellers have migrated to the cities. This rural-urban migration is the main reason for the population growth of Chinese cities, given that natural population growth has a limited impact and is even decreasing in big cities (Zhang 2007).

In the year 2011, the number of urban residents surpassed, for the first time in history of China, the number of rural inhabitants. By the end of 2013, the population in China reached 1.36 billion of which 53.73% are urban residents (National Bureau of Statistics/www.stats.gov.cn). This percentage is expected to grow to 60% by 2020 and 70–75% by 2030, adding approximately 300 million people in the urbanized areas by 2030 (Xinhua Daily/xh.xhby.net; Ye et al. 2014).

Since "new" China[1] is considered to be the urban successor of a previous agricultural China, a considerable surplus of uneducated labor forces, previously engaged in the agricultural sector, needed to be restructured (June 2010). In search of employment, higher incomes, and better living conditions, individuals started to migrate to the urbanized areas. Migrant workers are mostly employed in manufacturing industries, construction, and household service sectors, since this kind of employment needs little or no training (Long et al. 2010). At the end of 2013, the number of people employed in urban areas was 382.40 million, with a growth of 13.10 million compared to the previous year (National Bureau of Statistics/ www.stats.gov.cn).

In order to relieve the pressures of densely populated cities and house new residents moving from rural areas, numerous 'new villages,' 'new towns,' and 'new cities' were built, contributing to ever more agricultural land loss (Hartog 2010). From 1997 to 2003 around 65,000 square kilometers of farmland were lost, of which around 14% "was attributed to construction activity of all kinds, including the construction of highways, railroads, water conservancy facilities, ports, and urban developments. Only 10% of the lost farmland were converted to urban development uses" (Zhang 2007, 9). The State Council has introdced strict protection policies for the first time in the tenth five-year plan (2001–2005), in order to control cultivated land losses (Long et al. 2010, 464).

Accelerating urbanization and industrialization have influenced increases in rural land construction. In the period from 1990 to 2000, an increase of 7,900 square kilometers, or 93.2%, have been taken from cultivated land for rural construction (Long et al. 2010, 464).

In the process of urbanization in the Chinese context the question arises: How do urbanization processes influence rural populations?

Shanghai Suburban Development

When observing Shanghai's growth and development, a lot of attention was given to the population increase, expansion of the urban area, and the restructuring of industries. These changes were possible only after the introduction of the Open Door Policy in 1979, given that until then the population and boundaries of Chinese cities were strongly controlled. Massive rural-urban migrations have influenced Shanghai's government to rethink the opportunities of its suburban areas (Wu 2008).

With the aim of solving the issues of congestion in the city center, it was considered to construct independent new settlements. These new settlements should support large numbers of expected inhabitant inflow, approximately 300,000 new residents annually (Hartog 2010, 8), control the population influx to the city center, and to some extent support the resettlement of the current inhabitants (Weinstein and Ren 2009). Furthermore, inadequate industries are to be relocated from the city center to the new settlements, supporting their economic development and independence (Hartog 2010; Chiu 2008; He 2012).

New towns and smaller settlements have started to be developed in Shanghai's metropolitan region, following the model recognized by many cities in developing countries (Chen et al. 2009), stressing that suburban

areas of East Asia are the epicenter of the world's urbanization (LeGates and Hudalah 2014). Hundreds of square kilometers have been developed in Shanghai since the nineteen-nineties, involving both the city center and its suburban areas (Hartog 2010).

In 1990, the Chinese government enabled land leasing, which was followed by significant construction growth. Additionally, the status of almost all Shanghai's rural districts was changed into urban districts, enabling the citizens to move out of the city center, and yet keep their urban registration, *hukou*, with significantly more privileges than the rural *hukou*. At this point, the Shanghai Master Plan was once again revised, with a focus on extremely high urbanization levels expected until 2020, ensuring the protection of agricultural land resources and preventing urban sprawl (Hartog 2010).

In 1999, the new Master Plan for Shanghai proposed the 1-9-6-6 Model as a strategy for the city's development until 2020. This model entitled 'one' existing central city, 'nine' new cities as administrative centers of each district (300,000–1,000,000 residents), 'sixty' new towns (50,000–150,000 residents) and 'six' hundred local villages (approximately 2,000 residents) (Hartog 2010; He 2012). As a pilot project for this strategy "One City, Nine Towns Development Plan" was suggested. The already existing satellite town, Songjiang, was planned to be further developed into a city. An additional 'nine' new towns were planned as local centers (Hartog 2010). At the same time, two additional projects were proposed, new harbor city—Lingang New City and eco-city—Chongming Dongtan (Hartog 2010). These projects were initiated by the municipal government in order to stimulate urbanization and promote the global image of the city (Shen and Wu 2012).

"One City, Nine Towns Development Plan" was withdrawn in 2006 and the 1-9-6-6 Model was officially adopted. The eco-city project was not carried out, while on the other hand, Lingang New City was considered as an important economic development point. As part of the Shanghai government's effort to relocate industries outside of the city center, numerous industrial parks are also planned and constructed in support of Shanghai's suburban areas economic development (He 2012).

In order to put Shanghai back on the map of global cities, a new deepwater port construction project was launched in 2012 (Brown/inkydigit.com). The Yangshan deepwater port comprises several islands in the Hangzhou Bay, incorporated in a large surface mainly reclaimed from the sea. The port is connected to the mainland by the thirty-two-kilometer long Donghai bridge, opened in 2005 as part of the first phase of development.

In 2001, an area of seventy-four square kilometers south of Shanghai, between the Yangshan deepwater port and Pudong Airport, was defined for the construction of Lingang New City (New Harbor City) (Hartog 2010). At a later stage of the design, the area was enlarged to 296 square kilometers, intended to house 800,000 inhabitants. The main city area was mostly reclaimed from the sea, in the same way as the Yangshan deepwater port (Hoffmann-Loss 2014).

In 1992, the Pudong New District Master Plan was established, introducing a special economic zone in Shanghai, which enabled international trade to go through Shanghai (Hartog 2010). The district was

enlarged in 2009, intensifying the connection to the Yangshan deepwater port.[2]

At the beginning of 2014, Lingang New City was connected to the Shanghai city center by subway line 16, enabling tourism levels to grow, especially in the vicinity of Dishui Lake. The main city shows the features of an unpopulated and undeveloped city, whereas, industrial areas, on the contrary, are quite developed. Due to the proximity of shipping possibilities in Yangshan deepwater port, heavy industry takes the lead, e.g. automobile, aircraft, shipbuilding, and renewable energy industries (Lingang Profil 2010/www.lgxc.gov.cn/en). At the time when the Shanghai Master Plan 2001–2020 was developed, the city's suburban areas were planned to house the same number of residents as the city center at that point, eight million residents. However, the number of residents in the suburban areas largely exceeded the expectations. From 2000 to 2006, population growth in new cities was 20.8%, and in industrial areas 31.2%. At the same time, the number of residents in the city center did not decrease (He 2012). By the end of 2012, the Shanghai metropolitan region had, in total, 23.8 million residents (Shanghai Statistical Yearbook 2013).

Urbanized land in the metropolitan region of Shanghai doubled from 1997 to 2006. In 1997, urban land occupied 1,073.1 square kilometers, and by 2006 it had increased to 2,080.3 square kilometers. This urbanized land increase is mostly due to the development of suburban areas which escalated from 626.9 square kilometers in 1997 to 1,536.7 square kilometers in 2006 (Yu 2008b). According to the Shanghai Master Plan 2001–2020, 20% of the city's suburban areas are to be developed for residential purposes together with 283 square kilometers for industrial uses. The increase in residential land-use development from 1997 to 2006 in suburban areas was 157.7 square kilometers, or 17% growth. On the other hand, by 2010, already developed industrial land use was 716 square kilometers, considerably exceeding the plan (He 2012). Plans for restructuring of the industry are giving the priority to tertiary industries in the city center while moving the secondary industries to the periphery (He 2012). The decrease in the rate of secondary industries in the city center was 71% from 1997 to 2006. In 2008, 84.2% of Shanghai's total industrial land was concentrated in suburban areas (Yu 2008a).

Case Study—Lingang Nicheng Community

As an outcome of the Lingang New City mega-project development, many rural communities ceased to exist. Farmland was converted into urbanized land and farmers into factory workers. In order to understand this transformation more profoundly a case study was chosen: a typical new settlement on the south of Shanghai, the Lingang Nicheng Community (later in the text just Nicheng Community).

Nicheng area was first populated at the beginning of the twentieth century by fisherman communities. These communities used a system of dikes, widely applied in the area of the Yangtze River Delta, for reclaiming land from the sea and expanding arable land. Since the seacoast has moved continuously towards the south, due to natural alluvial deposits and polder systems, Nicheng area was eventually populated only by farmers.

Nicheng Community is one of four locations in the region of Lingang New City appointed for relocation and resettlement of local farmers affected by the urbanization process. However, the amount of relocation housing is still not final. In the process of assigning plots, the government subsidized program of relocation and resettlement has priority over the commercial housing, meaning that the first available plot for development, even if located in the prime location, enters the relocation and resettlement program. This strategy provides a combination of neighborhoods, which further on creates a spatial and social mixture quality (Zheng 2014; Wang 2014).

Starting from the reforms in the nineteen-eighties, many factories and small business moved from the city center to the Nicheng area, creating various job opportunities for the local population outside of agricultural production. During the nineties and two-thousands, following China's economic growth, this trend continued and local farmers are increasingly employed in the industrial sector.

In 2003, land-use rights in the area of Nicheng were changed, due to Donghai Bridge construction and its transit connections between the Shanghai city center and Yangshan deepwater port. Local farmers are offered financial compensation for their land, together with a possibility to purchase apartments in a newly constructed area, for amounts significantly lower than the market values (Zheng 2014).

According to the guidelines of the Lingang New City Master Plan, in 2004, the total area planned for Nicheng Community was 7.1 square kilometers and the population size planned for was 65,000 people (Shanghai Urban Design and Research Institute 2011). Since the requirements for relocation and resettlement changed in 2005, according to the city's government reevaluation, the planned population of Nicheng Community changed to 100,000 people. Due to this increase, public facilities were substantially extended as well. Consequently, the planned area also increased to 8.28 square kilometers (Shanghai Urban Design and Research Institute 2011).

Albert Speer & Partner developed an urban design plan for Nicheng Community, including in its spatial studies, architectural form, major parks, road location, and the landscape design of water bodies (Shanghai Urban Design and Research Institute 2011). The traditional organic spatial organization was taken over from the existing urban structure, as well as the typology of centralized public urban functions. In order to support gradual development, urban spaces in the old Nicheng Town center were to coexist together with the new Nicheng Community center from the very beginning of the construction process. The land-use plan points out several zones in the Nicheng Community: central functions zone, mixed zone, green areas zone, industrial zone, and residential zone (AS&P 2005).

In 2011, the Nicheng Community shows alternately urban and rural patterns. The total built area is 3.3 square kilometers, which makes up 34.29% of the total planned area. Newly built areas are mainly residential, concentrated to the north and to the south, with the focus on relocation and resettlement residential quarters. Constructed public service facilities include several edu-

cational centers, one cultural center, one shopping mall, and a part of the greenbelt (Shanghai Urban Design and Research Institute 2011).

Before the construction, existing small towns of Nicheng and Peng jointly accounted of roughly 51,500 people. In 2011, Nicheng Community had approximately 59,000 inhabitants. Most for the current inhabitants are relocated and resettled from the Nicheng area, as well as from the nearby areas affected by development (Shanghai Urban Design and Research Institute 2011).

It is expected that a significant number of floating population (migrant workers) settle in the area of Nicheng due to the development of the Lingang Industrial Zone. For the moment, approximately 30,000 migrant workers live and work in the Nicheng area. The number is expected to grow and the government has developed projects to support this objective. In 2014, the Public Rental Housing project for migrant workers was completed, with the capacity of 60,000 to 70,000 people (Zheng 2014).

Detailed Case Study—XiaGuang Road

In the detailed case study area of the XiaGuang Road (霞光路), a mixture of different typologies of residential quarters is notable. XiaGuang Road and quarters around it were one of the first developments in Nicheng Community. First residents moved into this area in 2006, but the majority of current residents settled here in 2008. Most of the apartments are owned by the people living in them, and only 26% of inhabitants rent their apartments. 58% of the interviewed residents participated in the relocation and resettlement program, of which even 77% are originally from the Nicheng old town. Employment possibilities and affordable housing were one of the main factors that attracted 42% of the interviewed residents to settle in this area.

The price per square meter in the relocation housing is much lower than the price for commercial housing in Nicheng Community. Just to have an overview, the price for a square meter in relocation housing quarters is approximately 2,000 Yuan (ca. 270 EUR), while the price in commercial housing quarters is between 17,000 and 18,000 Yuan (ca. 2,300–2,450 EUR) (Zheng 2014), which is still significantly lower that the price for a square meter in central Shanghai, being above 30,000 Yuan (ca. 4,050 EUR) (Global Property Guide 2015/www.globalpropertyguide.com).

46% of the interviewed residents have a monthly household income in the range between 1,000 and 5,000 Yuan (ca. 135–675 EUR). This can be related to the Annual Disposable Income of Urban Households in Shanghai in 2012 of 3,349 Yuan (ca. 452 EUR) per month (Shanghai Statistical Yearbook 2013). There is also a significant 16% of the interviewed residents whose monthly household income is lower than 1,000 Yuan (ca. 135 EUR), which is lower than the average monthly income of a rural household in Shanghai of 1,450 Yuan (ca. 196 EUR) (Shanghai Statistical Yearbook 2013).

The results of the detailed case study survey shows that 33% of the interviewed residents are not employed. These are mainly women who are stay-at-home parents. Another 30% are employed in the Nicheng area, while 37% of the residents have to commute larger distances to the place of their employment.

Public Space and Activities

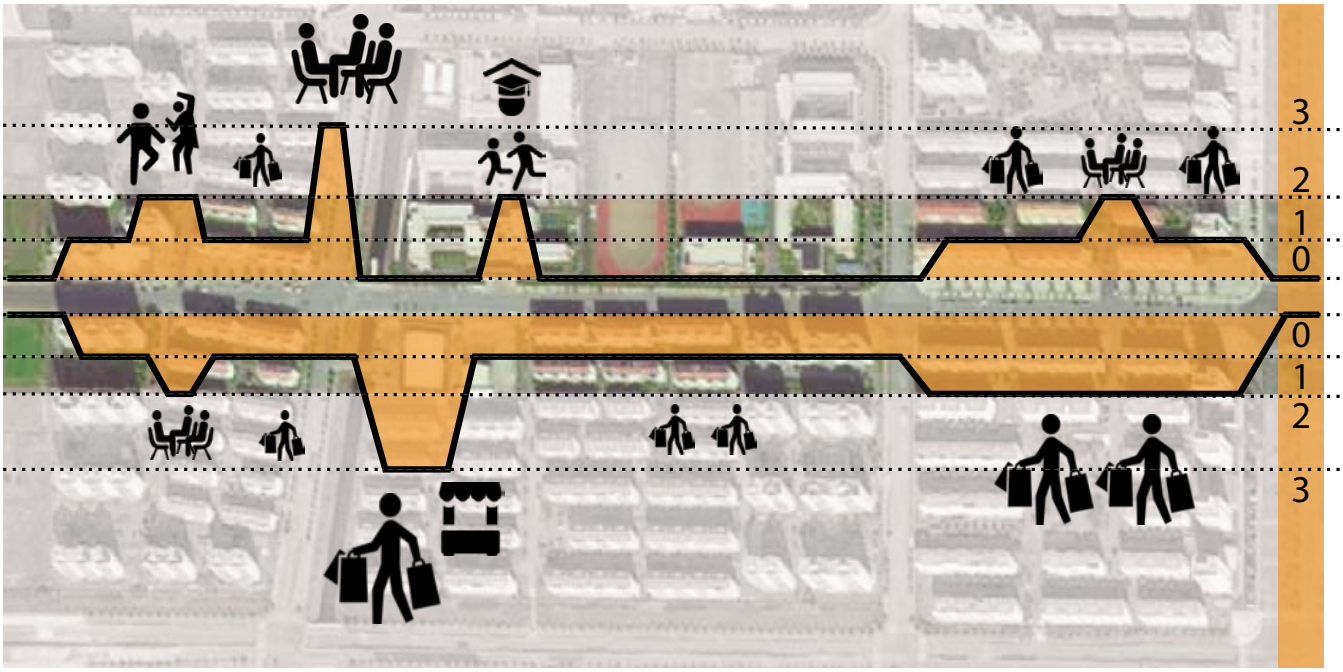
Nicheng area has a high level of independence to the Shanghai city center. Moreover, many of its elderly population have never been to the city center. The Nicheng Old Town Center spontaneously developed after the nineteen-nineties, when commercial content started to develop in the vicinity of the important transit route, Nicheng Road. For example, the area around Xincheng Road, a street parallel to the Nicheng Road, displays a high frequency of users being attracted by its commercial contents. The typology of ground floor commercial activities coexists with the informal selling stands on the pedestrian sidewalk. 50% of the interviewed residents of the detailed case study area rely on the Nicheng Old Town Center, and 15% use these commercial contents every day. The area around today's Xincheng Road is planned to be redeveloped and rebuilt in later stages of the Nicheng Community development.

In 2012, the construction of Riverside Park phase I was started, and by the end of 2013 it was mainly finished. Due to the lack of financial funds some planned elements are still not incorporated, like exercise equipment and a planned public pool (Zheng 2014). The Riverside Park size exceeds the needs of the current number of residents, and some accessibility issues are present. This corresponds to the rare visits of the local residents of the detailed case study area, despite its close proximity. Only 17% of the interviewed residents use the park on a weekly basis, and many of the interviewed residents were not familiar with the location of the park.

In the detailed case study area of XiaGuang Road, public space activities are plentiful. Wide sidewalks provide enough space for dance and tai chi practice groups, which is a significant part of a daily routine of the local community. In addition, residents gather at the neighborhood entrance gates, attracted mostly due to the informal shopping possibilities. There is a lot of various commercial content along the street, which adds to the dynamism of the sidewalks in the afternoon. A market place supplies the local residents with fresh vegetables, mostly produced locally, and is another important daily activity pinpoint (▶1, 2, 3).

When it comes to the spatial planning of a new town that is to house the social transformation and support urban lifestyle for an until recently rural community, it is very important to pay attention to the local customs and traditions as well as provide the possibility for growth in intermediate states. Lingang Nicheng Community, which is so far half built out of the planned total, has vibrant and dynamic street life: seniors gather in front of their buildings, informal market places pop up in the afternoon, and dancing groups occupy the small square. On the other hand, a newly built town park seems to be a place of no interest. A question arises if the constant occurrence of obvious disparities between high-rises and crop fields, and between urban and rural lifestyle can be addressed through urban planning (▶4, 5).

1
XiaGuang Road, Public
Space Activities Map



Shopping and strolling
Sitting
Dancing
Vegetable market
School

No activity – 0
Low activity – 1
Medium activity – 2
High activity – 3

2
Impressions of Nicheng

3
Impressions of Nicheng

4
Impressions of Nicheng

5
Impressions of Nicheng

Employment and Occupation Shifts

In the Nicheng Community area, as an outcome of the industrialization of agriculture, not only did the landscape undergo a significant transformation from rural land to urban land, but these transformations also influenced the local residents. To answer the question of how urbanization processes influence rural population, many local farmers were relocated in newly built urban areas as part of strong zoning and residential clustering efforts. Since ever more industries are attracted by the proximity of Yangshan deepwater port, local inhabitants are seen as a potential workforce. Training and education supported by the government is perceived as an important part of restructuring the population's occupation.

In order to support urbanization from the social point of view, the Nicheng Residents Committee has established a Labor Guarantee Office. This facility's objective, since its initiation in 2008, is to enable unqualified farmers with basic education to participate in the labor market. The government subsidizes this project with an annual budget of 2 million Yuan (ca. 270,000 EUR), in order to promote the transition from agricultural to industrial employment in the region. Joining the Labor Guarantee Office program for farmers is free of charge, and after completing the training they can apply for a job at the factory they have received the training for. One person can take part in up to three different training programs. In Nicheng area every year around 3,000 new job opportunities open and around 2,000 people participate in the training program of Labor Guarantee Office (Zheng 2014). Until now, only 29% of the interviewed residents of the detailed case study area have participated in training programs offered by Labor Guarantee Office.

Even though Nicheng Community inhabitants reside in an urban environment, some are still involved in agricultural production, full time or part time, in combination with other types of employment. This small-scale farming very often takes place next to the high-rises, on the still undeveloped plots, and is accessed through the new town's boulevards. At this point another question arises: can the intrinsic disparity between urban and rural lifestyle be addressed through urban planning?

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Notes

1 Meaning China after 1949.

2 First anniversary of joining Pudong and Nanhui by Liu Huabin, available at http://sh.sina.com.cn/news/s/2010-08-09/0820151747.html

The Urbanization of Rural Space in Latin America under Pressure from the Exploitation of Nature: The Case Study of Casanare in Colombia

Liliana Giraldo Arias

Introduction

Most countries in Latin America adopted a planning system based on the Spanish model of decentralization in order to achieve a more efficient fiscal system, service provisions, autonomy, and democratization. However, decentralization was never fully accomplished due to the strong resistance of the central government to give up national decisions and control over regional and local levels. The major flaws of the Latin American development model are the extreme focus on economic interests, followed by corruption at the local level, and the priority given to private interests and to money derived from the uncontrolled exploitation of nature. Accordingly, most Latin American economies are based on the *extractivism* of mining, oil exploitation, and extensive monocrops, which are causing the deep deterioration of rural areas to great social and environmental detriment, exactly as we see in the region of Casanare in Colombia.

For the past sixty years, Colombia´s political and social dynamics have affected urban and rural development. The armed conflict that Colombia has been suffering for decades due to narcotraffic, guerrillas, and paramilitarism—organized civil armed groups—is causing a dramatic impact on society and territory because of military operations, political and social violence, forced evictions, and kidnapping. These issues altogether cause a large number of Colombians to migrate from the countryside to more urbanized areas, producing massive rural exodus, accelerated and unplanned urban expansion, and the proliferation of peripheral informal settlements. On the other hand, displacement due to natural disasters

including floods, earthquakes, and landslides affects not only urban and rural transformation but also the national social and spatial structure causing greater inequities, and a deepening of the social and economic gap between the poorest and the richest of the society. Additionally, the uneven distribution of economic resources coming from national and local governments exacerbates the tension between rural and urban in medium and small-sized cities.

Another major obstacle for development in Latin America including Colombia is that planning tends to be urban-oriented, yet the profound changes in the agricultural sector and the use of rural land poses a grave threat to rural economies and societies. Given these challenges, national governments are shifting to a more regionally oriented development model, giving priority to territorial spatial policies in order to overcome social and environmental problems.

Therefore, the concept of political ecology influences the approach to regional planning based on the idea of environmental justice in order to structure grassroots participatory processes to spatialize development actions, not only in urban contexts, but mainly in the rural. Thus, working with community, productive sector, government, and political actors directly involved in local and regional development could contribute to the democratization of knowledge and help build political capacity. Consequently, there is an opportunity for North-South and South-South cooperation through research and policymaking, including the experience and knowledge of diverse groups like scholars, activists, professionals, scientists, and local community leaders, to promote critical debates and to propose scenarios assuming the role of active agents of change.

Planning Transfer from North to South

Planning practices from the Global North have been adapted to the South, but the process has been far from seamless. Local realities are different, especially due to the major social inequalities and severe environmental degradation in Latin America. Some of these social and economic problems are generated by a conception of development that is based on capitalism, which favors the accumulation of economic resources through the exploitation of nature.

In the context of a globalized economy, in which radically unequal political and social power has led to territorial fragmentation, planning policies have defined social and environmental goals as priorities over economic and political interests. However, spatial planning and policies are mostly focused on urban development, largely ignoring social and environmental dynamics in rural areas.

In the transferring of planning systems, policies, and strategies, especially between Western Europe and Latin America, information technologies have served as the means to spread global capitalism across borders. Communication and information technologies throughout the world have globalized effects and interests through all continents (Castells 1993). These factors clearly have effects on planning at the urban and rural levels. Due to a connected and globalized world, large international companies are transforming their operation structures to reach external local contexts. These effects of decen-

tralization have been possible with the agreement of national governments and political powers that involve the private sector, and are represented in different roles in local communities, appointed agencies, and political parties among other interested actors (Booth et al. 2007).

Competition for Economic Hierarchies a Cause of Territorial Fragmentation

With the entrepreneurial presence of transnational companies replacing traditional economic activities at the sub-national, local, and regional levels, governments at the city and regional level adopted competitions to attract external investment and greater involvement of the private sector looking for key international contexts to locate their operations (Herrschel and Newman 2002). Economic forces affect some cities more than others do. Since global economies are uneven, few cities are in the top part of the hierarchy, excluding others from development growth. Limited economic opportunities, adequate infrastructure, and communications contribute to their struggle, leading to territorial inequity and fragmentation (Newman and Thornley 1996). These political and economic aspects have an impact on spatial planning, creating a scenario of forces of strong alliances between public and private partnerships as well as changing the priorities of political agendas. Political authorities have a visibly strong influence on planning at the regional and city level, which at the same time, responds to business interests, the central government, and the national legislative framework. These facts lead to the question of when public authorities stop having any more responsibility in the process and leave the delivery of the final product to the private agencies (Booth et al. 2007). Additionally, there is the problem of uneven spatial development under the role of the state at various scales that has produced uneven development in terms of competitiveness and growth by trying to alleviate inequalities, causing a polarization of territorial development. Under the configuration of a rescaled state spatiality, governments have institutionalized subnational administrative units to empower local and regional economies, but these are still centrally coordinated (Brenner 2004). That is the case of some countries in Latin America, where decentralization is not fully accomplished due to the strong resistance of the central government to give up national decisions and control over sectors at regional and local levels.

Spatial Planning in Colombia

Addressing the government's decentralization challenge, autonomous municipal Land-use Plans (LUP) characterize Colombia's planning system. Spatial planning and policies are mostly defined in terms of urban growth considering transportation, zoning, public space, basic service supplies, and population densities, among other aspects of a city's development. However, LUPs underestimate strategies that could provide integral and regional approaches to redefine power relations and actions for a more articulated urban and rural development.
One of the challenges Colombia is facing is the need to resolve the tensions and contradictions between the various territorial policies that are driving its current development such as sectorial development, municipal

spatial planning, land-use plans, ecological preservation zoning, and nature exploitation licensing. These tensions are posing various conflicts around planning policy definitions and their complex systems of implementation. Tensions involve political decisions for economic, social and territorial cohesion, governance efficiency, and environmental risks. Furthermore, territorial problems are mainly related to social and environmental impacts due to unregulated land-use changes, unsustainable production activities, rapid population growth, population concentration in cities, and the intense urbanization of unplanned settlements.

Planning Policies That Respond to Urban Development

Spatial planning and policies are mostly defined in terms of urban development, enhancing the city's characteristics; what is not that evident is the definition of the role of social and environmental goals in rural areas. It might be that political and economic aims are more feasible to achieve through urban planning than rural. Most attention is given to the physical development of cities or systems of cities, since the forces that affect urbanized development in a globalized world could have better responses to economic and political pressures. Consequently, the debates on planning tend to be urban-oriented; although rural contexts are equal constituents of the contemporary social reality, planning policies evidently tend to be oriented to an urban lifestyle (Booth et al. 2007). In fact, besides the economic and political pressures to develop urbanized areas, there is not a consensus idea of what *rural* is and what it is expected to be. There are different concepts for *rural* depending on the world region and the country; for some, it is a landscape on which a network of widely spaced small towns and villages have developed. For others, rural areas are defined simply as *not urban*. Thus, different concepts of *rural* are linked to social, economic, and cultural histories in each national context. Depending on the conception, planning policies are defined to either protect the countryside from physical development as a green landscape or protect the agricultural and agrarian production zones. Therefore, the focus of planning policies is still defined in term of urbanization and population density in rural settlements, which includes *town and fringe, village*, and *dispersed* (Booth et al. 2007). Hence, spatial planning and policies are mostly defined in terms of urban development, and enhancing the city's characteristics. Consequently, it is clear that the profound changes in the agricultural sector and the use and purpose of countryside, which are not evident in planning policies, pose a grave threat to territorial development and to the rural economy and society.

A Planning Reform for Regional Development

Recently, the Colombian central government issued Law 1454 (LOOT, Ley Orgánica de Ordenamiento Territorial) to introduce planning at the regional level in order to overcome territorial fragmentation, accelerated urban growth, environmental degradation, social inequality, and rural obsolescence. This law's main objectives target

institutional and territorial development by transferring skills and decision-making from central and decentralized government bodies to the regional level with the corresponding allocation of resources.
The LOOT opens new legal and administrative possibilities to assemble planning policies that consider geographic diversity, history, economy, environment, ethnicity, culture, and socio-political characteristics of a region. The law's principles are based on regional integration through cooperation, promoting community development, provision of public services, preserving the environment, and productive and social development. It also promotes sustainability and territorial equity through greater political, economic, and fiscal capacity to support regions or less-developed government entities in an attempt to guarantee equal access to opportunities and benefits for progress. The LOOT supports cooperation among municipalities to generate economies of scale, synergies, and competitive partnerships for territorial development, efficient productivity, and to strengthen regional identities.
Thus, this juridical act is an attempt to go further in terms of planning in order to articulate the territorial spatiality for the urban and rural development to multiple social, cultural, economic, environment, and political dimensions. However, the law has been applied with a narrow perspective of administrative efficiency, oriented to fiscal issues rather than facilitating innovation, long-term visions, new developments, and grassroots participation for better social services. Additionally, under the law it is possible to determine incongruities and inconsistencies between national sectorial systems and subsystems as laid out by juridical acts such as the Environment, Planning, Agrarian, Mining, Budgeting, and Participation Systems, as well as other sectors responsible for the integrated administration of rural and urban Colombian territories.

The Rural Colombia

Although Colombian planning policies are moving toward regional spatial planning, there is a lot to do in terms of offering opportunities to rural communities in terms of well-being and economic productivity in order to overcome the vulnerable conditions of rural settlements in relation to the most urbanized.
According to Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Colombia is twenty-fifth among 223 countries with more than ten million hectares that could be developed as agricultural land without affecting the natural reserve areas. Despite this, agriculture is one of the sectors that has been most affected by the results of illicit crops, armed conflict, and poverty. Therefore, one of the fundamental tasks of the government is to implement economic policies that allow for an efficient agricultural development in order to promote the country's economy. Currently, in Colombia there is a significant change in the food chain's production, and as a consequence, there has been a shift regarding land tenure from agricultural smallholdings to large national and international producers, changing the structure of land tenure and use from a traditional structure to a large-scale production agro-industry. Some other problems that are facing rural areas besides the inequitable land tenure are the productiveness of land

due to poor quality education, lack of technology, inefficient infrastructure, undeveloped local trade markets, and the lack of government policies for small farming. The report "Colombia Rural: Razones para la esperanza" (Rural Colombia: Reasons for Hope) on human development from the United Nations Development Program (PNUD 2011) addresses the issues of land use and rural populations, remarking that the 75.5% of the 1,123 Colombian municipalities are rural. This report concludes that Colombia has not modernized its economy; furthermore, it has not overcome extreme poverty. Moreover, rural municipalities present very precarious and deteriorated governmental authority, and thus, their populations have been segregated from political participation. Therefore, in disregarding the rural areas, government policies have ignored the vast majority of the country.

In addition, agrarian productivity and their natural context have been threatened by activities such as biofuel projects and mining**.** Biofuel companies, the mining industry, and mega-construction projects have threatened the environment, biodiversity, and food security, leading to the displacement of peasants and dispossession of land. In this regard, the major threat to rural development is the government's indiscriminate allocation of exploitation licenses to private companies, which is possible since the national government owns the country's subsoil. Furthermore, numerous ongoing mega-projects fail both to support any standards of sustainability and to take into account the interests of the local communities. Currently, Colombia is the fourth largest producer of palm oil in the world and the largest in Latin America. In 2011, 427,367 hectares of land were sown with oil palm and 233,905 with sugar cane—mainly dedicated to the production of ethanol. Since then, production based on the extensive exploitation of nature is constantly on the increase. Additionally, for several years there has been a mining boom in the country causing severe environmental and social impacts. This is due to the lack of regulation and control from government authorities on this form of exploitation. Proof of this is that by the end of 2010, around sixty percent of the country's rural land was under application review for possible mining concessions, of which ninety-four percent of the ongoing areas used for mining have no environmental approval (PNUD 2011).

Additionally, the poverty in the rural context has been exacerbated by the current armed conflict and by the fact that modernization and technology has been at the hands of the big landowners favored by agrarian policies. Colombia is a country with a high level of land concentration, which is under-used for agricultural purposes; this concentration is due to historical reasons and has been increased and assisted by the armed conflict, which has contributed to high rates of dispossession and forced displacement. Because of this situation, the present government has adopted a policy of land restitution. However, this policy has not yet been effective enough to recover the rural economy for traditional farmers and has many limitations. The issue of land ownership and exploitation, central to the Colombian armed conflict, is currently on the agenda of the peace negotiations *(Oidhaco. Ofician Internacional de Derechos Humanos-Acción Colombia, 2013)*.

1
Oil extraction site vs.
biodiversity in Casanare

2
Oil extraction in
Casanare

Nature and Culture as Profitable Resources for Territorial Competitiveness

Most Latin American economies are based on *extractivism*, which is the style of development based on the appropriation of nature by removing large amounts of unprocessed resources to be exported. The so-called *extractivism*, which includes mining and oil extraction, has a long history in Latin America. These activities played key roles in national economies, but also are the center of powerful struggles for social and environmental structures. *Extractivism* is an economic development model based on the insertion of international powers to which some Latin American countries supply raw materials (rarely diversified) to transnational companies. Therefore, the state plays an active role by maintaining and achieving greater legitimacy through the redistribution of some of the surplus generated by the extractive process even though negative social and environmental impacts are expanded (Gudynas 2009).

Regarding this panorama of environmental exploitation, a major issue for future development is the extent to which environmental concerns are reflected in planning policy and the implication of long-term strategies that are required to respond to broader public interest. There is evidence, however, that the environment and culture are becoming factors in marketing the image of cities and regions. The international importance given to nature and human-specific communities allows cities and regions to give more attention to those aspects and their sustainability in planning. Social and environmental values have become increasingly important in local decision-making. Therefore, the degree to which urban planning adopts solid social objectives depends to a large degree on the position adopted by nation-states for future development. However, usually governments' priorities are given to infrastructure to increase competitiveness that, on the contrary, could enhance social problems and environmental impacts. There are also concerns related to equitable distribution of resources, investments, and economic concentration, which exacerbates the tension between small and large cities or states, and rural and urban relationships (Newman and Thornley 1996).

From this perspective, territory is seen as a productive factor, from which the concept of natural capital arises, under which environment and people become economic capital from the commercial perspective. Thus, environmental sustainability is a major aspect to consider in territorial development that surpasses the passive vision of preserving nature and also considers the potential of nature resources (water, geography, climate, ecology, earth, air) as sources of development and social cohesion. Therefore, territorial planning should introduce an urgent shift from urban planning to territorial planning with a sustainable vision of environmental and social protection for a balanced urban and rural development since these are finite resources.

The concept of political ecology enriches the approach to regional planning based on the idea of environmental justice, and in order to structure grassroots participatory processes to spatialize development actions—not only in urban contexts but mainly in the rural. Thus, working with community, productive, governmental, and political actors, directly involved in local and regional develop-

ment, contributes to the democratization of knowledge and helps build political capacity and empowerment to actively participate in planning processes and projects (▶1, 2).

A Political Ecology Approach to Regional Planning

Political ecology is a theoretical approach to untangle the economic, political, and ecological processes involved in urban landscapes. The question is to understand how nature becomes urbanized, whose nature it is, and the uneven power over nature (Smith 1990). In this sense, nature has become a commodity, objectified and associated with profit. Smith poses the question of how to reconcile nature and society and how to understand the interaction between nature and society. The commodification of nature clearly shows the influence of a market-based society, which illustrates the socio-ecological processes of domination/subordination and exploitation/repression that are present in the nearby environment or in the most remotes places in earth. Urban political ecology recognizes the economic value of urban environments, which are controlled, manipulated, and serve especially the interests of few at the expense of marginalized populations (Heynen, Kaika, and Swyngedouw 2006).

In this sense, there is much to be done to avoid class forces and powers perpetuating class privileges over resource under the doctrines of *progress* (Harvey 1996). Thus, in this context of nature dominated by society, there is an uneven distribution of both environmental benefits and damages, which means that while environmental (social and physical) qualities may be enhanced in some places and for some people, they often lead to a deterioration of social, physical, and/or ecological conditions and qualities elsewhere. Furthermore, political ecology is about defining political strategies based on democratic participation for the organization of the environments that communities inhabit (Swyngedouw and Heynen 2003). Therefore, the concept of political ecology allows building a critical position from the relation between social groups and resources coming from nature, and the economic and political networks at multiple power scales of these relations in order to determine the way natural resources could be exploited (Heynen, Kaika, and Swyngedouw 2006) (▶3, 4).

The Case Study of Casanare in Colombia

As in most of the regions in Colombia, Casanare is characterized by the prevalent conditions of rural life: socio-economic conflicts, emergent human settlements, informal housing agglomerations, poverty, and scarce educational and health services. Additionally, Casanare has been the center of attention for oil extraction and agroindustries, changing the traditional economic dynamics of cattle raising and agriculture. These new activities that brought enormous economic resource to the department/region, changed its traditional lifestyle because of the introduction of new labor structures, land ownership, and population dynamics.

Casanare is one of the richest but most conflict-ridden departments in Colombia. It is rich in terms of natural

3
Palm oil monocrops vs.
biodiversity

4
Palm oil extensive
monocrops

resources, biodiversity, culture, and ethnicities, however its rural economy and lifestyle have been rapidly changing because of the massive exploitation of nature that brings important economic resources, through the allocation of royalties, to the department and its nineteen municipalities. Nevertheless, this growing economy has barely developed the region, instead it has caused environmental deterioration and social inequalities; the exploitation of nature has damaged the biodiversity, cultural richness, and social structure of the region.

Therefore, the social and environment impacts due to oil extraction, extensive monocrops—palm oil, rice and sugarcane—have changed the region's landscape, ecosystems, and workforce. In the case of agroindustry, economic gains are not subject to royalties. Therefore, gains are for private benefit, which are only obliged to taxation. Recently, oil prices have gone down, and therefore, development plans, which were based on the allocation of royalties at the departmental and municipal levels, have had to redefine their investment priorities and sources. Similar to the case of Casanare, there are numerous cases of biofuels production in various regions of Colombia. In addition, legal or illegal mining activities are dispersed all over the country as well as massive extraction zones of rubber, coal, and salt along with the agroindustry, which occupies large tracts of land. The impacts of the exploitation of natural resources can be seen in all regions of Colombia, however, Casanare is one of the most interesting case since it is one of the richest departments but one of the least developed in the country.

According to national regulations (Law 756, 2002), royalties coming from oil extraction allocated to municipal development plans had to be invested primarily on health, education, basic sanitation, water supply, sewerage, and roads for local communities and the region. However, the impact of royalties on municipalities is very small, despite the fact that municipalities have more economic resources to put towards development. Additionally, in the case of Casanare, the uneven distribution of resources exacerbates the tension between rural and urban areas and on the region's nineteen small towns and medium cities.

The accelerated economic growth of the region, due to oil extraction and agroindustry, has brought unconnected financial, political, social, and ecological processes that all together form a highly uneven and deeply unjust territory divided along urban and rural lines. Although municipalities have more financial resources for investment, there is limited vision for the region due to a lack of understanding of its spatiality and its multidimensional characteristics. Also, there is a lack of administrative and professional capacities of local authorities and a high level of corruption. Consequently, all these factors together have produced disconnected urban projects and rural interventions.

Conclusion

Considering the current situation of rural regions in Colombia due to the urban-oriented planning policies and the uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources, there is an opportunity for North-South and South-South cooperation through research and policy transformation to include the experience and knowledge of

diverse groups like scholars, activists, professionals, scientists, and local community leaders to promote critical responses and propose new scenarios. This cooperation could be given from the correlation of North to South because of the existing policy transfers. Moreover, political ecology could be a conceptual platform to approach regional, spatial, and governmental strategies to address environmental and social problems. In this way, participatory processes could become key actions to spatialize and organize developments for an integral and equitable regional development and to promote a harmonious rural and urban balance.

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No Urban Desert! The Emergence and Transformation of Extended Urban Landscapes in Oman

Aurel von Richthofen

If "urban jungle" was an adequate metaphor for expanding cities, then "urban desert" might appeal as the equivalent for a process of extensive urbanization in Oman. At first sight, the larger metropolitan area of the capital, Muscat, seems like an endless monotonous sea of free-standing villas.

Like the metropolitan area, the landscapes of Oman, ranging from the coastal plains of Al Batinah, to the plateaus of the Hajar Mountains, to the old cities in the Interior, the deserts of the Empty Quarter and beyond are subject to recent, dramatic changes. Multiple factors drive these changes first induced by the discovery of oil in 1965, the gradual development of the economy since 1970, and the demographic explosion thereafter. Housing for the population, which is growing at three percent annually, and the provision of infrastructure in

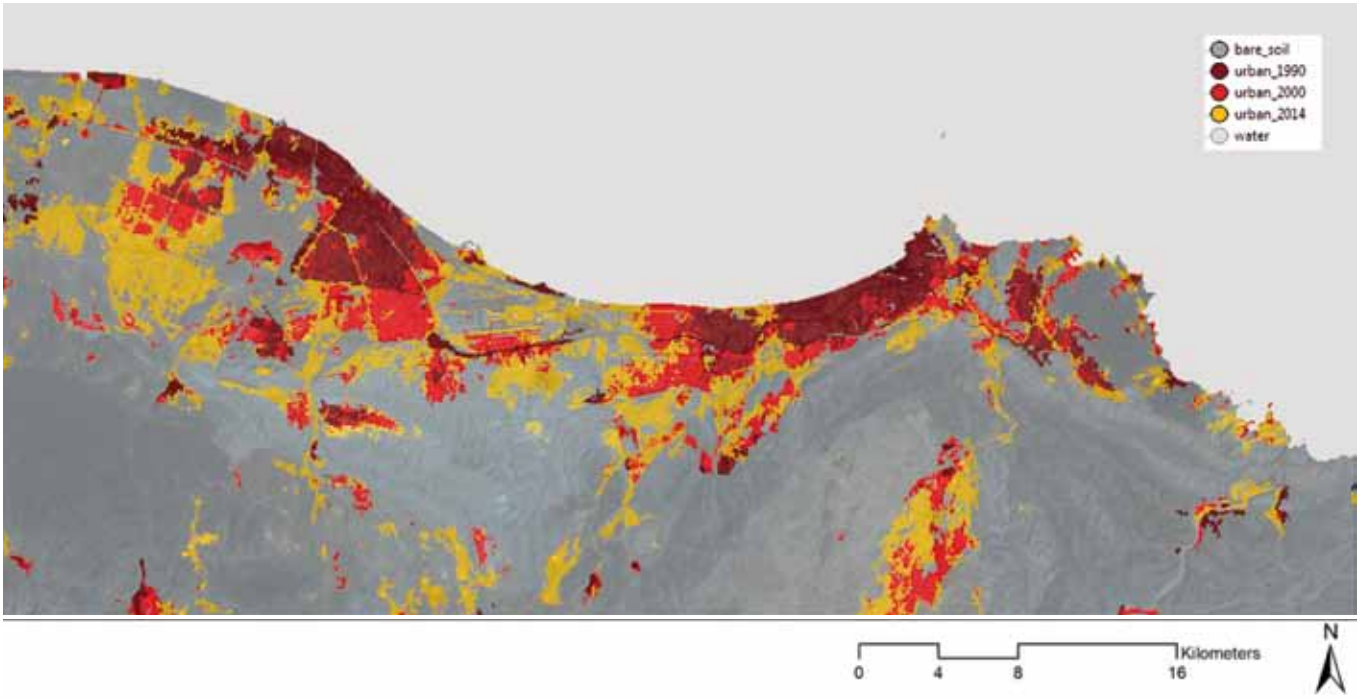
1
Temporal development of the Muscat Capital Area 1984–2014 (von Richthofen/Langer 2015)

the form of roads, ports, airports, schools, hospitals, and mosques became a national planning priority (Development Council 1976) and the measure of progress as well as public satisfaction with the rule of the Sultan. Today, these processes manifest in an endless proliferation of individual residential houses sprawling across the Omani landscape and can be subsumed under the process of extended urbanization as conceptualized on a global scale by Schmidt and Brenner (2014). The urban geography of the Muscat Capital Area has been studied by Scholz (1990), while the process of urbanization and its effects on urbanized areas, urbanizing areas, and areas beyond have been researched by Nebel and von Richthofen (2016). As the research scope expands, the definition of urban and rural in the Omani context needs closer attention (▶1, 2).

Oman's Urban Turn

The description of rural-urban dynamics in Oman starts with methodological questions of how to define the terms urban and rural in Oman? Following from there we can ask how much space is urban in Oman? Yet, the definition of what an urban area actually is poses challenges in Oman and elsewhere (Brenner 2014, 181ff). According to the UN Habitat (2012), eighty-five percent of the population of Oman lives in urban areas yet occupy only three percent of the Omani territory. The high urbanization rate arises from a very low threshold index of 2,000 inhabitants that qualify an area as "urban" within the UN statistics for Oman (as compared to 100,000 for other places). It would be wrong to conclude that the remaining territory is therefore non-urban or

2
Muscat Capital Area



"rural." Large parts of Oman including mountains and deserts are nearly uninhabited and could be considered naturally wild rather than "urban or rural." But even if these territories are excluded from the study and the remaining territories considered subject to permanent human interaction it would also be wrong to conclude that this urbanization process occurred unilaterally from isolated urban centers towards rural areas (▶3).

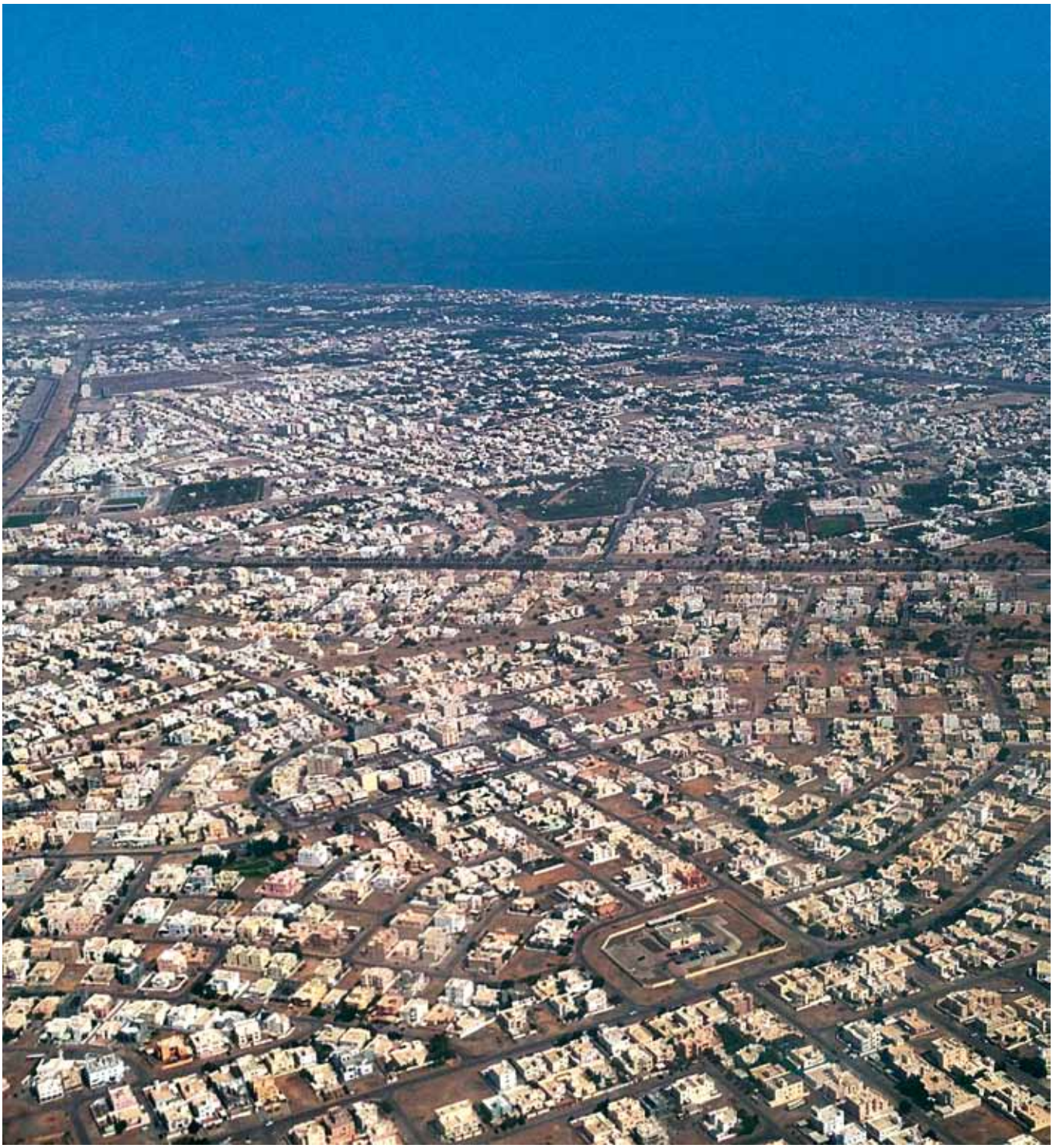
Since the opening of the country to the global market following the discovery of oil and subsequent economic development, the government of Oman has promoted investment and planning strategies. In the Sultanate of Oman, economic development is necessarily linked to spatial development. Indeed, the beginnings of the Omani urbanization predated 1970 and were largely located outside of the core urban space of the few coastal port cities. A study of US and Soviet military maps dating from 1945, 1964, 1973, and 1975, based on detailed explorations and the earliest satellite imagery, reveals that the present metropolitan area is preceded by a dense network of interlinked rural communities of coastal and hinterland oases. The larger case-study area shows a "compressed" temporal development due to the rapid and immediate transformation from rural state into extended urban state. The urban morphology developed along these lines into the present urban form of the Muscat Capital Area as von Richthofen and Langer (2015, 6) showed. The development of a modern economy and industry reliant on an urban infrastructure, therefore, had to first reconfigure the rural space into urban space for the economy to develop.

Steffen Wippel described the spatial turn in Omani politics as a "political, economic and social dynamics of region-building [contributing to a] broader understanding of regions as social constructs and of processes" (Wippel 2013, 22). According to Wippel, the socio-economic development of the country contributed to the construction of regions through a shift to spatial practice. The spatial transformation of Omani landscapes assigns them a supportive function in the modern vision of Oman. This economic-spatial transformation also overcomes traditional tribal structures and builds a modern Omani society wherein housing becomes a key strategy to secure the social contract. In an extension of the spatial turn, I would like to propose that the Sultanate of Oman is undergoing a rapid urban turn since 1970 that accelerated since 1990 as the focus of state-orchestrated development measures put the "urban" at the center of attention. Oman's urban turn, therefore, is a radical transformation of the Omani landscape, based on a pre-existing "blueprint" of interlinked rural communities and economies. Yet, this process has not resulted in a homogenous urban space, but in a complex process of urban emergence and expression out of rural roots—a reverse process of "ruralization."

Learning from Oasis Settlements

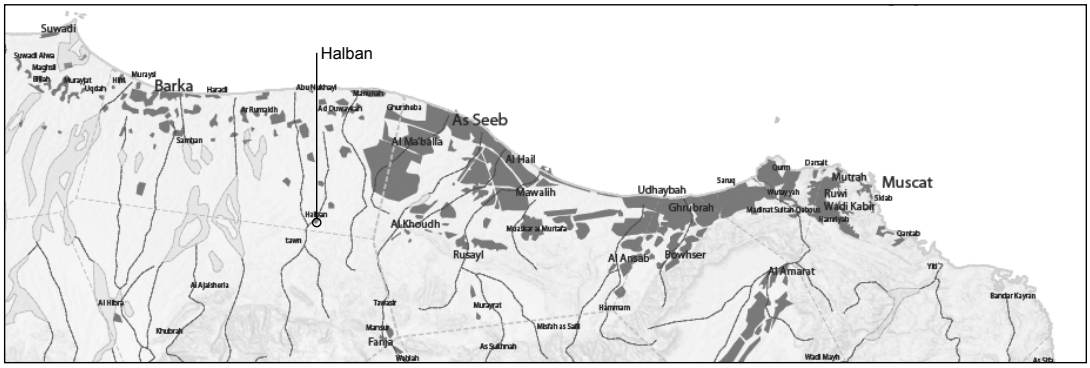
The rural roots of the present day metropolitan Muscat Capital Area can be found in the network of oasis settlements and trade hubs scattered at relatively even distance in the Al Batinah region. Two types of settlements can be distinguished in this pre-oil situation that remained unchanged until 1970. Both types are intrinsically linked

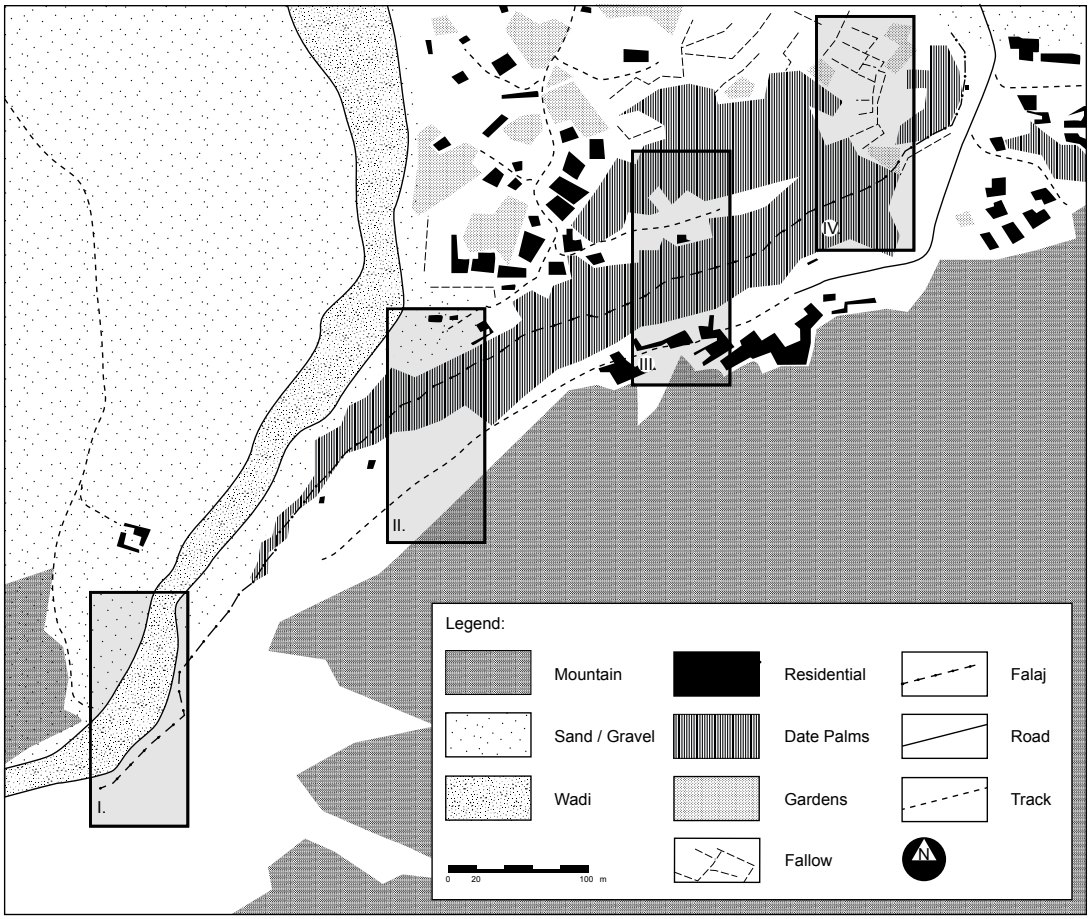
3
Monotonous urban sprawl in Al Batinah, Oman



to the hydrological conditions of the region. Fresh water sources can be found at the foot of the Hajar mountains at the point where *wadis* (dry river beds) enter the Al Batinah plain. Water was collected by water channel and distribution systems (*falaj*) and used for drinking, cleaning, and irrigation. The first type of oasis settlements along the mountain ridge based on *falaj* technology can be found here (Siebert, Nagieb, and Buerkert 2007, 3). As the fresh water disappeared underground it eventually contributed to the ground water table at various depths below the gravel plain of Al Batinah. Upon meeting salt water intruding from the sea, the lighter fresh water was pushed upwards so that a second type of settlement was possible along the coastline (Zekri, Al-Rawahy, and Naifer 2011, 5). These coastal oases relied on wells powered by animals to pump fresh water to the surface and irrigate the fields. A perpendicular cross-section from the coastline towards the mountains reveals the correlation of hydrology and settlement patterns. These settlements were interrelated by trade links and depended on each other's produce and commerce (Nagieb et al. 2004). Each coastal settlement had a counterpart on the mountain edge and the system proliferated like a lattice across the Al Batinah plain. Certain places eventually gained moderate power over a larger region to become centers within a hub and spoke system. The size of each settlement, as well as the density of settlements across Al Batinah, was given by the amount of water extractable over longer periods of time, and therefore the number of inhabitants it could support. This natural limit also meant that the largest regional center, Muscat, counted barely more than 10,000 inhabitants prior to 1970 while the total number in Al Batinah was estimated at more than 200,000 (Korn et al. 2004). The inhabitants led labor-intensive and demanding lives but had achieved a circular and sustainable economy. While the present number of inhabitants in this region has increased tenfold since 1970 and is now close to two million, a return to such an idyllic past is neither possible nor desirable. The spatial configuration of the built environment, as well as the configuration of settlements within the extended network, was, in the past, directly dependent on water management and the resulting agricultural production. Scholz (1984, 273) identified fundamental structural correlations while studying the oasis settlements of Dariz in the Omani Interior. These particular oases were fed by a long *falaj* and "sunken" into the relatively featureless gravel plain. Thus, these particular settlements were planned from scratch by their inhabitants, designed without external factors interfering in the "ideal" layout, and completed according to the optimal use of available resources. For Scholz, the spatial layout of the oasis was dictated by the best use of the scarce resource water. Within the spatial configuration of the settlement, water was used sequentially first for drinking, second for cleaning, and third for irrigation. This multi-use of water also resulted in a multi-use of space with dedicated extraction wells, washing places, and irrigation channels each sided by dedicated communal spaces. Both usage patterns of water and space followed sequential functional cycles to maximize the efficient use of these resources. Space serviced with fresh water and prone to agriculture was equally scarce as the fresh water itself. These oases represent the latest

4
Halban oasis
settlement in
Al Batinah, Oman





5
Extended urbanization in Oman: The urban-rural interface Fanja, Al Khoud

form within a long tradition of planned agricultural settlements; the culmination of pre-oil technological, agricultural, and urban co-evolution. The sequence of uses can also be studied in oases settlements on the foothills of the Hajar mountains of Al Batinah, such as Halban. Thus, in these settlements, the availability and functional distribution of fresh water resources gave rise to equally precious spatial resources usable for agricultural production and inhabitable space. This overlap of hydrology, agriculture, and architecture is the blueprint for a sustainable urban-rural network. A visit to the site in 2016 revealed that the symbiotic relationship of water management, agriculture, and the built environment yields the potential for adapted and sustainable development strategies for Oman originating from these rural networks (▶4).

Changing Rural Spaces

As studied by Nebel and von Richthofen (2014), the rural-urban interface in the Al Batinah region produces urban enclaves as extended rural systems. On the one hand, the urban enclaves are new settlements planned from scratch and developed solely to house the growing number of inhabitants without consideration for the management of scarce resources of water, land, and energy. On the other hand, the extended rural systems develop out of former agricultural settlements, gradually devoid of their productive agricultural function as nuclei of new housing settlements. Both forms converge and contribute to the formation of the present metropolitan area as a functionally segregated, energy demanding, inefficient, and unsustainable region. As studied by Al Shueili (2015), the administrative system and planning framework currently accelerate this process with incentives and subsidies in the form of land-allocation low mortgages. Al Gharibi (2014) adds that social and cultural factors like the perceived need for representation and privacy, as well as economic and political support, encourage space-wasting architectural typologies like the "Omani Villa." These free-standing and space-consuming houses transform the landscape despite obvious climatic disadvantages (▶5).

The proliferation of the "Omani Villa" had consequences far beyond the aesthetic component of urbanization as studied by von Richthofen (2016) in the comparison of the urbanization of the Muscat capital to an extended "mass-ornament." The need to serve both urban enclaves and extended rural systems with road access and electricity changed the intermediate landscape even further: dry river beds were dammed upstream, mountains cut, and valleys filled in to make way for roads, and topography leveled to create convenient industrial spaces (von Richthofen 2015, 98). Unique archaeological and historical monuments like the bronze-age tombs are being lost forever (Cleuziou and Tosi 2007, 29). The scarce agricultural land is overused and then neglected and often converted into building land (Zekri, Al-Rawahy, and Naifer 2011, 12). In the eyes of the planners and decision-makers, the dry gravel and stone landscapes of Al Batinah seem to have no monetary value and can be manipulated at will. In an interview with the Ministry of Housing, Oman revealed that neither surveys nor feasibility studies precede the design and development of

6
Wounded landscapes
in Oman, 2016

housing zones. This growing disconnect between planning and resource management is destructive, irreversible, and not sustainable (▶6).

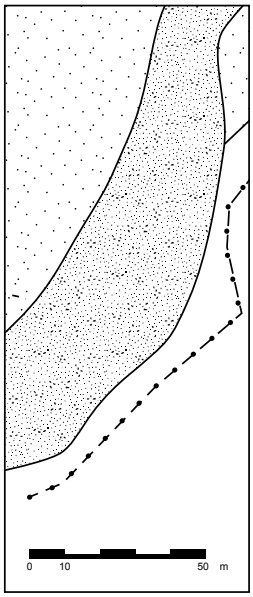
Since the beginning of modern spatial planning with the adoption of the first five-year plan in 1970, housing, and later urban planning has been given priority over the development of agriculture, water, and energy management. In a seemingly deserted country, land-resource management was not perceived as a priority. The Weidleplan (1991) planning strategy separated the interlinked aspects of water management, agricultural and industrial production, and land resources. As a result, the hierarchy of planning and housing over resource management further structured the "functional" layout of the city. The ONSS (Constatt Ltd. and Supreme Committee of Planning 2014) spatial strategy did not offer further insights to this. Throughout the planning legacy of modern Oman, economic development in general, and that of urban areas in particular, depended on rents from fossil resources. As seen in the sharp fall in oil prices in 2015, this financial resource might be worthless even before it becomes exhausted. Indeed, Oman relies, like most of the Gulf States, on oil-based revenues. If the dramatic changes in rural spaces were not sustainable so far, they are now no longer affordable.

Sustainable Landscape in Oman

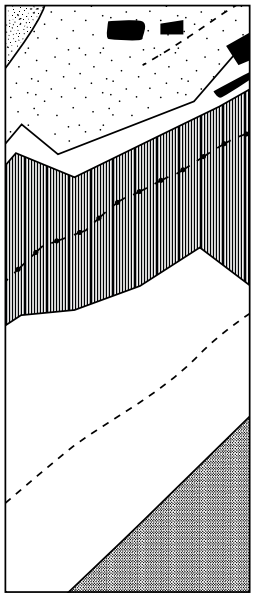
The study of rural transformations in Al Batinah reveals that processes of extended urbanization in Oman are guided and based upon pre-oil and pre-urban agricultural patterns. These patterns still exist to a large extent today, even though they have been partially overbuilt and transformed. Furthermore, the study of late oasis settlements in the Omani Interior offers insights on the correlation of resource management and spatial configuration. This knowledge can be gathered by re-examining the water-agriculture-space paradigm and mobilized for sustainable development. This paradigm implies that, under the rural precedent, a productive agricultural component could be extended to production in a more general sense under the extended urban; to the production of renewable material, food, energy, and social capital, etc., in conjunction with the development of space. This formula requires slow and gradual growth.

Yet, given the current development pace and lack of integrated planning, the fragile rural networks in Oman and the knowledge of how to manage their resources are at risk of being depleted and lost. As shown above, both challenges and answers to the problem of sustainable development for the Al Batinah in Oman and arid regions beyond lie in the comprehensive planning of rural areas. A revaluation of rural over urban qualities would also lead to a reversal of the planning hierarchies that currently prioritize resource consumption over resource management. A reverse process of "ruralization" as the expression of complex processes of urban emergence could be the way forward towards sustainable landscapes in Oman (▶7).

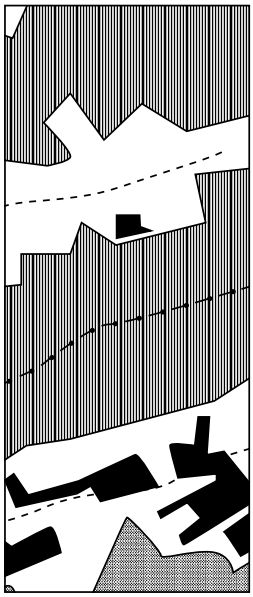
7
Sequential use of space illustrating the water-agriculture-space paradigm



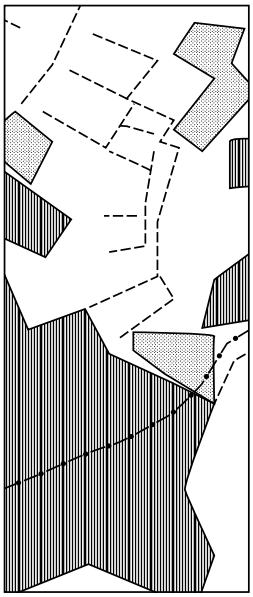
I. Falaj source



II. Falaj and irrigated palms



III. Falaj, palms and adjacent settlements



IV. Falaj ends in gardens and fallows

Legend:

Residential
Date Palms
Gardens
Fallow
Falaj
Road
Track
Mountain
Sand / Gravel
Wadi

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Note

1 Acknowledgement: The fieldwork and initial research was conducted in Oman from 2011–2014 under a research grant by The Research Council Oman CBS-ORG-09-001 with Dr. Sonja Nebel.

Hinterland

Interview with Stephan Petermann, OMA/AMO, Rotterdam

What role do villages and smaller towns have in a world in which the majority lives in cities?

It has become an enormous cliché that half of mankind now lives in the city, and that this proportion is only increasing. This has been a pretext for architects to focus only on the city. Ironically, the Harvard Project on the City itself, launched in the mid-nineties, was perhaps partly responsible for the initial shift, but not for the maelstrom that followed. We are bombarded in architecture books with statistics confirming the ubiquity of the urban condition, while the symmetrical question is ignored: What did those moving to the city leave behind? The countryside is ninety-eight percent of the world's surface and fifty percent of mankind lives there. But our preoccupation with cities creates a situation comparable to the beginning of the eighteenth century when vast areas of the world were described on maps as terra incognita. Today, the terra incognita is the countryside. The emptying of the countryside is having a more drastic impact than the intensification of the city. While the city becomes more itself, the countryside is transforming into something new: an arena for industrialized nostalgia side by side with total control of the landscape, new patterns of seasonal migration, massive subsidies and incentives, data storage, digital farming, species homogenization, genetic experimentation… It would be difficult to write such a radical inventory of the city. It shows that the supposed dialectical opposition of urban growth and rural decline might be true when you look at population proportions, but not at the actual size of infrastructure or built substance.

Could you comment on and describe a bit the situation in the Netherlands or the other countries you have been working in?

We have mostly been traveling through Russia, the Netherlands, and Germany. In Russia, we stayed in small villages built under early communism in almost derelict conditions where you still find a lot of energy and enthusiasm. In Germany and the Netherlands, I can say the same, the "depression" of the built environment now and again does not always coincide with the mental alertness you find in the villages. This might also explain the hipster focus on rural aesthetics. In the next stages of the project we will be focusing on Africa and China. I think there will be, partly due to sustainability and economy forces, a pressure to start designing new villages to relieve the pressures on cities, specifically in China and Africa.

In your presentation at our conference, you mentioned a study about a piece of Dutch landspace. Can you describe your approach and findings? Was this the starting point for AMO´s exploration of the rural?

We had and have some presumptions and initial hunches of what was happening in the countryside—about work, the role of agriculture, migration, leisure—which if you only draw upon statistics still remain flat or generic. So we took a section of Dutch countryside of 12 x 3 kilometers, largely random apart from the fact that it is under the reign of heritage and relatively old land for Dutch standards (seventeenth century), and visually resembled the prototypical Dutch landscape. We went for two days on bikes and asked at every house we saw what the inhabitants were doing. The responses confirmed most of the hunches—you hardly would encounter actual farmers, more band members, writers, artists, logistics workers, massage parlors, yoga studios, release doves, etc. We also tried to buy an operational farm to become real farmers, which really puzzled the local real estate agents as his clientele had never asked for that.

In the current city-centered discourse, rural spaces are often dismissed as declining or stagnating. However, rural spaces also play a critical role in sustainable development, as an inextricably linked counterpart, but also as a complement to the growing city, as extraction sites, natural reservoirs for food, freshwater, and air, or as leisure spaces. Do we need to formulate a (new) vision for 'ruralism'?

Yes and it will. So far, a move back to the countryside is haphazard and mostly very locally organized, but with the prevailing pressures on the cities increasing, there is no other way. And it's great! There is so much space, larger scales are easy, so little costs, so much more freedom and space for experimentation. You actually don't need urban farming or other forms of penance, you can just do them. If you look at the visions of the modern utopias from the nineteen-sixties, none of them would be possible to be built in the current cities due to financial and preservation-related constraints. So if we want to keep pursuing this agenda, there is no other way then turning to the countryside. Our cities might be done, little left to dream about.

How do digital innovations change work and life in the countryside?

With a new fixation on the smart city, we are missing a more radical and unheralded transformation in the countryside, which is—without us knowing it—becoming far more intelligent than the smartest urban realm. A colossal new order of rigor is appearing everywhere. A feed lot for cows is organized like the most rigid city grid, server farms are being hidden in remote forests. The digital is promising and delivering the ultimate exploitation of the last drop of potential of each patch of ground. Every action—from planting to weeding—is specified for the smallest pixel to generate the largest possible yields. Landscape and tablet have become identical—the countryside is a vast and unending digital field.

I have been a frequent attendee of agricultural technology fairs for some years now. The amount of development has been tremendous and beautiful. The type of focus and precision and perfection these machines already have and continue to pursue is probably the most radical outcome of the enlightenment. Compared to the architecture debate, the agritech world exists as if postmodernism had never happened, which is both a relief and frightening. At the last *Agritechnica* in Hannover I did notice some fatigue in innovation in terms of robotization and automation, I think mostly because agriculture is so heavily entrenched in the market economy. There is a delicate balance between the cost of human labor and investment in technology, largely dictated by the economy, which at the moment is still in favor of humans. But the farmer-less farm is definitely already around the corner.

You mentioned facilities like server farms that occupy more and more land away from urban areas. How do these developments challenge our image of "the rural" and our understanding of architecture?

Tech companies use the land based on several parameters like climate, employment, distance, and tax. US states have been providing generous tax breaks to facilitate tech companies, larger because of the dire state of their economies. It has become clear that the jobs they provide are not as beneficial to the local economies as hoped, and States therefore have reduced the tax breaks, so now you see these companies slowly returning again to the suburban sides of cities. What is apparent in the architecture of these gigantic boxes, sometimes almost a kilometre long, is that there is no consideration of the environment they are put in—and always follow a very rigid Cartesian geometry. We think there is a relationship between the brutal rationality in these boxes and the increasing frivolity of urban architecture.

How and with what human consequences are rural spaces being urbanized today? How would you measure what is rural and what urban?

I think most of the attempts at formalizing the relationships are completely understandable and courageous, but I don't feel drawn to it. For me, it is more interesting to understand life in various densities and at various infrastructural characteristic and perimeters and to see if the profession can respond to it. Both statements, if the rural is actually urban, or that parts of the urban are increasingly rural are true. That makes the glorification of the supposed fifty percent threshold of the urban population

breach so tricky: it's always stuck to rather imperfect definitions.

We see a recurring discrepancy between, on the one hand romanticized glorifications of the landscape and on the other, dramatic predictions of the demise of villages and dystopian images of the countryside. Could you also observe this tendency?

I think it would be great if we could reunite the two. Or at least find other ways of glorifying the modern countryside and seeing it again as a space for futurism and accelerations. I think this could become an appealing gesture to re-invite people to be part of the countryside again and see if we could experiment and invent the twenty-first century there.

What role can architecture and urban design play in preparing rural life and space for the future? Is the rural an arena for urban design at all?

The celebration of the romantic countryside in magazines like *Country-Living* and *Landlust* through intense forms of Scandinavian minimalist beige-colored boredom can well benefit from a clear antidote or at least a new aesthetic. The modern countryside could definitely be a great inspiration for new scales, material use, and programs. The question of what architecture and urbanism become when the density becomes close to zero is a great and exciting challenge.


18


Vechelde
Hier wohne ich gern!
Vechelde
VECHELDE


ommen bei Raiffeisen


Wolfenbüttel 12
Wittmar 3,5
Winnigstedt
Remlingen


Fukushima 11800km
150km Gorleben
30km Thuno
Drehscheibe
Zwischenlager
Industriepark


ENDLAGER
KANN MAN
NICHT
ABSCHALTEN


NP
7:00-20:00


30


Festsaal
Hengeholt-Heuer

Authors

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Marie Bruun Yde holds an interdisciplinary MA in Modern Culture with a focus on architecture and urbanism from Copenhagen and Berlin. Her professional experience spans research, writing, and urban curating projects in Denmark, Germany, and Holland. She has edited several publications and organized seminars on urban regeneration, participatory planning strategies, and public art projects as a tool for urban development.

Vanessa Miriam Carlow studied architecture and urban design at the Technical University Berlin and the Technical University Delft from 1995 to 2002. She completed a master's degree in urban management at five European universities and received her doctorate in strategic planning from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen. In 2005, she founded COBE in Copenhagen together with Dan Stubbergaard. Since then she has worked as a self-employed architect. In 2012, she was appointed professor at the TU Braunschweig Faculty of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Environmental Sciences, where she heads the Institute for Sustainable Urbanism. At the same time, she established the architectural practice COBE Berlin. With her office she has won numerous awards.

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Yeon Wha Hong received her professional degree in architecture from The Cooper Union in New York City and her master's degree in urbanism from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In addition to professional experience in NYC and Paris, she was also a Fulbright Fellow in Japan, where she investigated the notion of cultural continuity in Modernist and contemporary Japanese architecture. She is a LEED Accredited Professional. Since 2012, she is based in Berlin and has taught and conducted research at the Institute for Sustainable Urbanism, TU Braunschweig.

Jonna Majgaard Krarup worked for a period of twelve years, since her master's thesis in 1988, in private offices before returning to academia in 2000. In 2003, she defended her PhD thesis, and since then she has been teaching and conducting research within landscape

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Jens Kvorning is Professor in Urbanism and the Head of Center for Urbanism at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Schools of Architecture, Design and Conservation. His research themes include the history of urban planning, strategic planning strategies, sustainability and urban structure, and urban transformation and restructuring in European countries. His recent projects include strategies for sustainable urban restructuring, strategies for sustainable transformation of post-WWII suburban districts, density and urban sustainability, the role and dynamics of creative districts in urban transformation processes, and transformation strategies for deprived areas.

Sigrun Langner is a junior professor of landscape architecture and landscape planning at the Bauhaus-University Weimar. Her research interest is the potential of a design-oriented cartography for understanding and designing large-scale urban landscapes. Her current research focuses on "(r)urban landscapes" as a result of the urbanization of rural space and the ruralization of urban space. She is a registered landscape architect and co-owner of Station C23–architecture landscape urbanism in Leipzig.

Ines Lüder works as a researcher and lecturer as the Chair of Regional Building and Urban Planning at Leibniz University Hannover. She is involved in the research project Regiobranding, funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. Lüder studied architecture in Braunschweig and at the University of the Arts in Berlin. She worked as an architect in Berlin for Weinmiller Architekten and ASP Schweger Assoziierte and has realized her own projects as well. She participated in the Bauhaus Dessau Kolleg—EU-Urbanism and has taught at the Technical University in Berlin.

Patrick Lüth is the managing director and a partner at Snøhetta, he has been with Snøhetta since 2005. He started off as an intern and worked on many international competitions due to his exceptional 3-D skills. He has been involved in many of the most spectacular design submissions for Snøhetta in the recent years, including the Swarovski Kristallwelten Evolution project. Since 2011, he leads Snøhetta's studio in Innsbruck, Austria.

Olaf Mumm studied architecture at the Bauhaus-University Weimar. Olaf has over ten years of experience at the interface between urban planning and design in praxis and research. He has been involved in inter- and transdisciplinary as well as design-based research projects focusing on urban phenomenona, structures, and typologies, as well as the development of methods and instruments for indicator-based urban design and planning. In 2014, Olaf joined the Institute for Sustainable Urbanism at the University of Braunschweig—Institute of Technology and is working on the collaborative

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Dirk Neumann studied architecture at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology and Warsaw University of Technology. Dirk has over ten years of experience as an architect and planner in the Netherlands. His work ranges from urban and regional planning to landscape analysis and cartography. He has been involved in transdisciplinary research projects in planning coastal and delta regions. In 2014, Dirk joined the Institute for Sustainable Urbanism at the University of Braunschweig—Institute of Technology and is working on the collaborative research project "METAPOLIS—an inter- and transdisciplinary platform for the sustainable development of urban-rural relations in Lower Saxony."

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Stephan Petermann holds a master's degree in the History of Architecture and the Theory of Building Preservation and joined OMA in 2006, assisting OMA's founder Rem Koolhaas with lectures, texts, and research. He supported Rem Koolhaas at the EU Reflection Group and was one of the associates in charge of Koolhaas' Fundamentals Architecture Biennale in Venice in 2014. His most recent project is the exhibition "What is the Netherlands" at Het Nieuwe Instituut in Rotterdam. He is currently preparing two research projects: one about the metabolism of workspaces, the other on the future of the countryside.

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Ralph Richter studied Sociology and Communication and Media Studies at the University of Leipzig and at the University Federico II in Naples/Italy. He was a scientific assistant at the Institute of Sociology, University of Leipzig, and at the TU Darmstadt. In July 2011, Ralph completed his doctoral thesis with the title "Nach dem Schrumpfen. Stadtbezogene Identität als Potenzial schrumpfender Städte/After shrinkage. Urban-related identity as potential for shrinking cities" (Berlin 2013). Since June 2014, he is a research fellow at the Leibniz

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Christiane Sörensen is a landscape architect and, since 2006, Professor of Landscape Architecture at HafenCity University in Hamburg. Prior to her tenure at the HCU she taught at the University of Fine Arts of Hamburg (HfBK), where she founded the research and teaching lab Studio for Topographical Thinking and Designing. In 2003–2004 she held a Lady Davis Visiting Professorship at the Technion in Haifa, Israel. In 2013, she organized and curated the ECLAS conference "Specifics." Her research interests range from the modern commons and borderlands to the role of narrative in landscape architecture. Her most recent research project looks at the contribution that manifestations of the rural can make to urban environments that are marked by rapid growth.

Annett Steinführer holds an MA in Sociology and East European Studies and a PhD in Sociology. She is works as a social scientist at the Johann Heinrich von Thünen Institute, the German Federal Research Institute for Rural Areas, Forestry and Fisheries in Braunschweig, Germany. Her current research focuses on rural development in Germany with a specific interest in small-town development and its actors as well as socio-spatial consequences of aging and population decline. Before dealing predominantly with rural areas, her research at the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research (UFZ) in Leipzig dealt with socio-spatial inequalities and demographics in cities, post-socialist urban transition in Central Europe, as well as methodological issues of housing research.

Belinda Tato and Jose Luis Valleja are cofounders and co-directors of the firm ecosistema urbano, established in 2000 in Madrid. Ecosistema urbano is a group of architects and urban designers operating within the

fields of urbanism, architecture, engineering, and sociology. They define their approach as urban social design: the design of environments, spaces, and dynamics in order to improve the self-organization of citizens, social interaction within communities and their relationship with the environment. They have used this philosophy to design and implement projects in Norway, Denmark, Spain, Italy, France, Russia, and China. Ecosistema has received more than forty awards in national and international architecture design competitions.

The Pk. Odessa Co is a cooperation of photographers founded in 2010 by Simon Jüttner, Markus Lanz, and Sebastian Schels, who are based in Munich and Brasilia. Being both photographers and architects/urbanists, their common work is devoted to the precise study and photographic description of architectonic spaces. They focus on land- and cityscapes as 'lived space.' Works include freelance artistic work, as well as monographic documentations of architectural work.

Eckart Voigts is Professor of English Literature at TU Braunschweig, Germany. He is President of the German Society for Theatre and Drama in English, co-editor of the journal JCDE, and on the Board of the Association of Adaptation Studies and the journals Adaptation (OUP) and Adaptation in Film and Performance (Intellect). He has published widely on transmedia storytelling and participatory culture and is currently co-editing Companion to Adaptation Studies for Routledge. His 'spatial turn' was engendered by studies of nineteenth-century industrial novels and early science fiction in his postdoctoral ("Habilitation") work, as well as his research focus on heritage culture.

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Imprint

Concept: Vanessa Miriam Carlow, Verena Schmidt, Anja Ziebarth
Copyediting: Justin Ross, Berlin
Design, cover design and setting: jovis: Susanne Rösler
Lithography: Bild1Druck, Berlin
Printing and binding: DZS Grafik d.o.o., Ljubljana

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at http://dnb.d-nb.de

jovis Verlag GmbH
Kurfürstenstrasse 15/16
10785 Berlin

www.jovis.de

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ISBN 978-3-86859-430-0

ISU Talks #03
Ruralism. The Future of Small Towns and Villages in an Urbanizing World
International Conference, 18.11.2015 at the Technische Universität Braunschweig

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This conference and publication was funded by the Ministry for Science and Culture Lower Saxony (MWK), Alfred Herrhausen Gesellschaft, Fachgruppenrat Architektur Technische Universität Braunschweig, Verein zur Förderung der Baukunst e.V. and the Embassy of Spain in Germany.