



# Analyzing the Discourse on the *Zwischenstadt*

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## Abstract

In this paper I locate my PhD thesis, an analysis of the discourse on the so called *Zwischenstadt*, i. e. urban landscapes, in the trans-disciplinary field of urbanism. In the first section I present the subject and the aim of the thesis, which consists of an analysis of the wilderness metaphor for the *Zwischenstadt*. After this, I sketch two major results: a systematic delineation of (metaphorical) readings of the urban landscapes as 'city', 'cultural landscape' and 'wilderness' as well as findings of the actual analysis of current planners' and architects' statements on the *Zwischenstadt*. A presentation of the methods used and developed (discourse analysis, ideal types and worldviews as instruments to systematize different meanings of readings of the *Zwischenstadt*) leads over to the conclusion. There I discuss how approaches inspired by cultural sciences contribute to reflecting and improving the practice of urbanism.

## Introduction

"Urbanism is grounded in various practices, discourses and realities with respect to the city." This statement in the call for papers to this PhD seminar adequately describes the trans-disciplinary nature of urbanism as well as the origins of this trans-disciplinarity: The object of urbanism, the city, or more generally spoken: urban environments, is a complex issue. To grasp it in all its dimensions, a multitude of disciplines and approaches has to work together.

In this paper, I will locate my PhD thesis<sup>1</sup> in the trans-disciplinary field of urbanism. Its subject area, the *Zwischenstadt*, i. e. urban landscapes, already marks the need to transcend narrow urbanistic approaches. The design and planning of urban landscapes requires that knowledge from different disciplines is brought together: urban design, landscape architecture, regional and city planning, architecture, ecology, nature conservation, traffic planning, etc. Designed as a *discourse analysis*, my thesis accounts for the importance of another group of disciplines relevant to successful urban design: the humanities, especially the cultural studies.

In the first section, I will introduce the subject, aims and first results of my thesis paying special attention to the approach developed and the methods adopted in my work. I will conclude by identifying the transdisciplinary approach of my thesis and by analyzing its contribution to research and practice in the field of urbanism. The focus of this contribution does not lie on results of my dissertation, but rather on the discussion of its methods and its overall approach.

## ***Zwischenstadt*: City, Cultural Landscape or Wilderness?**

### *Approach of the thesis*

The subject of my thesis is the discourse of landscape architects, urban designers, planners and architects on the so-called *Zwischenstadt*<sup>2</sup>. This term was coined by German urban designer Thomas Sieverts to designate the phenomenon of fragmented urban landscapes.<sup>3</sup> Other concepts which refer to similar forms of urban reality are e. g. "sprawl", "suburbia", "Métapolis"<sup>4</sup>, "Netzstadt"<sup>5</sup>, or "Tussenland"<sup>6</sup>. The variety of names mirrors the wide and confusing range of evaluations of the *Zwischenstadt*.

Literally translated, '*Zwischenstadt*' means 'in-between city'. The preposition '*zwischen*' respectively 'between' does not only refer to the city's location in the region, but also and primarily to the economic, social and cultural features of these areas: "They take up large areas, and they have both urban and rural characteristics. The *Zwischenstadt* stands between the individual, special place as a geographical and historical event and ubiquitous developments of

1 The working title of the thesis is: "*Zwischenstadt*: City, Cultural Landscape or Wilderness? An Analysis of Different Readings". Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Ludwig Trepl (Technische Universität München), Prof. Thomas Sieverts (Bonn).

2 Throughout the paper, I will stick to this German term as my thesis deals with the German language discourse.

3 Thomas SIEVERTS, *Zwischenstadt: Zwischen Ort und Welt, Raum und Zeit, Stadt und Land* (Basel - Boston - Berlin: Birkhäuser, 1997/2001); English translation: Thomas SIEVERTS, *Cities Without Cities. An interpretation of the Zwischenstadt* (London - New York: Spon Press, 2003).

4 Francois ASCHER, *Métapolis ou l'avenir des villes* (Paris: Éditions Odile Jacob, 1995).

5 Franz OSWALD, Peter BACCINI and Mark MICHAELI, *Netzstadt - Einführung in das Stadtentwerfen* (Basel - Boston - Berlin: Birkhäuser, 2003).

6 Rainer JOHANN, "Innovationsland: Tussenland" in Sophie WOLFRUM and Winfried NERDINGER (ed.), *Multiple City. Stadtkonzepte 1908 | 2008* (Berlin: jovis, 2008), 38-42.



the global division of labour: between the space as an immediate living area and the abstract traversing of distance which is only measured in the consumption of time; between the mythical Old City which is still very effective, and the Old Cultural Landscape which remains anchored deep in our dreams.”<sup>7</sup>

The aim of my PhD work is to find a new order for the discourse on the *Zwischenstadt*. What do I mean by “new order”? This expression takes into account the already existing suggestions of how to systematize the discourse.<sup>8</sup> I do not simply add another suggestion of how to order the debate; I rather build on the existing ones by deepening and combining them.

At first glance one can distinguish *three basic attitudes* within the broad range of positions towards the *Zwischenstadt*:<sup>9</sup>

- (1) The first position vehemently rejects urban sprawl. Its representatives, whom I name the *opponents of the Zwischenstadt*, advocate the ideal of the compact European City.

Representative theorists in Germany are for example Mönninger and Hoffmann-Axthelm; the design philosophy of Krier and Kohl is typical for this attitude. In the US one has to think e. g. of Kunstler, Hayden as well as Duany, Plater-Zyberck and Speck.<sup>10</sup>

- (2) A second attitude has come to terms with and at least accepts the *Zwischenstadt*, arguing that it is a reality -whether you like it or not. Its representatives agree on the *Zwischenstadt* on the condition that it is *qualified* by certain conditions - therefore I call them the *qualifiers of the Zwischenstadt*. These conditions seem to include the improvement of the physical, aesthetic, social and economic situation in the urban landscapes in order to create an urban everyday living space.

One of the most prominent representatives of this attitude in Germany is Thomas Sieverts. He has led the so-called *Ladenburger Kolleg*, a research project that has aimed at improving the quality of life in the *Zwischenstadt*. Research that has emerged in this context, for example by Boczek, Bölling, Bormann et al. and Körner, is also typical for the position of qualification. In an international context, Ingersoll and Waldheim could be mentioned exemplarily.<sup>11</sup>

- (3) A third position is unreserved advocacy of urban sprawl. I have called the representatives of this attitude the *enthusiasts of the Zwischenstadt*. They euphorically embrace the indeterminacy and openness which they ascribe to the urban landscapes.

This strategy is basically a Dutch invention of the 1980s. It is represented by theorists such as Lootsma, and offices like OMA and MVRDV. The mastermind and main protagonist of this position is Koolhaas, other representatives are for example Lerup and Vöckler.<sup>12</sup>

A second aspect I have focused on, apart from the three basic attitudes, is the way urban sprawl is conceived. Among other, less often mentioned interpretations (such as sprawl as ‘garden’ or ‘paradise’<sup>13</sup>), the readings of the *Zwischenstadt* as ‘city’, ‘cultural landscape’ and ‘wilderness’ seem to be of major importance. They are used frequently, and they are used by representatives of all basic attitudes—opponents, qualifiers and enthusiasts. This is conspicuous. It would have

7 SIEVERTS, *Cities Without Cities*, p. 2.

8 A first group of suggestions systematizes the discourse according to the criterion of the general attitude planners and architects have towards the *Zwischenstadt* [cf. Gabriele SCHULTHEISS, “Alles Landschaft? Zur Konjunktur eines Begriffes in der Urbanistik” in Ulrich EISEL and Stefan KÖRNER (ed.), *Landschaft in einer Kultur der Nachhaltigkeit. Landschaftsgestaltung im Spannungsfeld zwischen Ästhetik und Nutzen* (Kassel, 2007), 86-104; Oliver BORMANN, Michael KOCH, Astrid SCHMEING, Martin SCHRÖDER and Alex WALL, *Zwischen Stadt Entwerfen* (Wuppertal: Verlag Müller + Busmann, 2005)]. A second system to order the discourse pays attention to different interpretations and metaphors of sprawl (see for example SIEVERTS, *Cities Without Cities*, p. 44). A third pattern of classification is based on the political and ideological background of the positions [Susanne HAUSER and Christa KAMLEITHNER, *Ästhetik der Agglomeration* (Wuppertal: Verlag Müller + Busmann, 2006); BORMANN et al., *Zwischen Stadt Entwerfen*, pp. 100, 134].

9 Although my focus is on the German language debate, it is necessary nonetheless to take account of some of the positions taken by planners in other countries, given that the debate on city and wilderness is conducted internationally.—See for a similar systematization SCHULTHEISS, *Alles Landschaft*; cf. Vera VICENZOTTI and Ludwig TREPL, “City as Wilderness: The Wilderness Metaphor from Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl to Contemporary Urban Designers” in *Landscape Research*, 34/4 (2009): 379-396.

10 Dieter HOFFMANN-AXTHELM, *Die dritte Stadt. Bausteine eines neuen Gründungsvertrages* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1993); Dieter HOFFMANN-AXTHELM, *Anleitung zum Stadtumbau* (Frankfurt am Main - New York: Campus, 1996); James Howard KUNSTLER, *The Geography of Nowhere. The Rise and Decline of America's Man-Made Landscape* (New-York - London - Toronto - Sydney - Tokyo - Singapore: Simon & Schuster, 1994); Michael MÖNNINGER, “Stadtflucht macht frei. Wie Architekten und Raumplaner sich vom städtischen Zivilisationsmodell verabschieden” in *Merkur* 54/1 (2000), 36-44; Andres DUANY, Elizabeth PLATER-ZYBERK and Jeff SPECK, *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Nation* (New York: North Point Press, 2000); Dolores HAYDEN, *A Field Guide to Sprawl* (New York - London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004).

11 SIEVERTS, *Cities Without Cities*; Lars BÖLLING and Wolfgang CHRIST, *Bilder einer Zwischenstadt. Ikonographie und Szenographie eines Urbanisierungsprozesses* (Wuppertal: Verlag Müller + Busmann, 2005); BORMANN et al., *Zwischen Stadt Entwerfen*; Stefan KÖRNER, *Natur in der urbanisierten Landschaft. Ökologie, Schutz und Gestaltung* (Wuppertal: Verlag Müller + Busmann, 2005); Richard INGERSOLL, *Sprawltown. Looking for the City on its Edges* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006); Charles WALDHEIM (ed.), *The Landscape Urbanism Reader* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006); Barbara BOCZEK, *Transformationen urbaner Landschaften. Ansätze zur Gestaltung in der Rhein-Main-Region* (Wuppertal: Verlag Müller + Busmann, 2007).

12 Rem KOOLHAAS and Bruce MAU, *Small, Medium, Large, Extra-Large* (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1995); Kai VÖCKLER, „Psychoscape” in Walter PRIGGE, *Peripherie ist überall* (Frankfurt am Main - New York: Campus, 1998), 277-287; Bart LOOTSMA, “Synthetic Regionalism. The Dutch Landscape Toward a Second Modernity” in James CORNER (ed.), *Recovering Landscape* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999), 250-274; Lars LERUP, *After the City* (Cambridge, MA - London, England: The MIT Press, 2000); Rem KOOLHAAS, Stefano BOERI, Sanford KWINTER, Nadia TAZI and Hans Ulrich OBRIST, *Mutations* (Barcelona - Bordeaux: Actar, 2001).

13 See for example Donald APPLEYARD and Kevin LYNCH, *Temporary Paradise? A Look at the Special Landscape of the San Diego Region, 1974* < [http://www.c3sandiego.org/Temporary\\_Paradise.pdf](http://www.c3sandiego.org/Temporary_Paradise.pdf) > [accessed 12 August 2009].

been plausible to expect that certain interpretations occur preferably or exclusively within certain basic attitudes. However, although each basic attitude has a *specific way* of conceptualizing and evaluating the *Zwischenstadt*, the *same* (metaphorical) readings are used to illustrate the respective point of view. This is due to the fact that *one* concept can have *multiple*, even *contradictory* meanings. Thus I propose the following thesis:

*Due to their multiple meanings and evaluations, the three concepts ('wilderness', 'cultural landscape' and 'city') can be used by the opponents, the qualifiers and the enthusiasts to express different attitudes towards the Zwischenstadt.*

My approach to order the discourse on sprawl is to combine the analysis of the basic attitudes with the analysis of the different (metaphorical) readings of the *Zwischenstadt*. Thus a first systematization of the discourse consists of identifying nine discourse positions [fig. 1].

	Opponents of the <i>Zwischenstadt</i>	Qualifiers of the <i>Zwischenstadt</i>	Enthusiasts of the <i>Zwischenstadt</i>
'City'	Opponents of the <i>Zwischenstadt</i> who interpret it as 'city'	Qualifiers of the <i>Zwischenstadt</i> who interpret it as 'city'	Enthusiasts of the <i>Zwischenstadt</i> who interpret it as 'city'
'Cultural landscape'	Opponents of the <i>Zwischenstadt</i> who interpret it as 'cultural landscape'	Qualifiers of the <i>Zwischenstadt</i> who interpret it as 'cultural landscape'	Enthusiasts of the <i>Zwischenstadt</i> who interpret it as 'cultural landscape'
'Wilderness'	Opponents of the <i>Zwischenstadt</i> who interpret it as 'wilderness'	Qualifiers of the <i>Zwischenstadt</i> who interpret it as 'wilderness'	Enthusiasts of the <i>Zwischenstadt</i> who interpret it as 'wilderness'

[fig. 1] The nine discourse position result from the combination of the basic attitudes towards the *Zwischenstadt* with its different (metaphorical) readings.

I focus on the metaphorical reading of the urban landscape as a form of 'wilderness'.<sup>14</sup> In their different statements, planners and architects either designate the *Zwischenstadt* literally as 'wild nature', or else they mention such features of urban sprawl that could at least be interpreted as aspects of 'wilderness'.<sup>15</sup>

The most prominent meaning implied by the wilderness metaphor is that the *Zwischenstadt* is uncontrolled and uncontrollable. "As a whole, the diffuse city gives an 'unplanned' impression, but it has arisen out of innumerable individual, and - considered on their own - rational decisions".<sup>16</sup> Another analogy between 'wilderness' and the *Zwischenstadt* lies in the idea of freedom. Also, just as the natural wilderness, the *Zwischenstadt* seemingly plays the role of the 'other' for (urban) civilization. Vöckler states e.g. that the urban periphery, if it is characterized at all, is described "as excrescence, rank growth, or wilderness. Despite its evident artificiality, its largely man-made materiality, the metaphors of naturalness applied to the periphery suggest strangeness and the impossibility to rule and control it."<sup>17</sup> Thomas Sieverts identifies a mode of reading the periphery as "wilderness",<sup>18</sup> and Boris Sieverts titles an essay "City as Wilderness".<sup>19</sup>

When an opponent designates the *Zwischenstadt* as 'wilderness', one can assume he or she is recurring to other meanings of 'wilderness' than an enthusiast using the same concept. However, the meanings of the concepts of 'wilderness', 'cultural landscape' and 'city' are not arbitrary; they rather follow certain *cultural patterns*. These patterns are fundamentally distinct interpretations of the world, i.e. different worldviews (*Weltanschauung*). Each worldview formulates specific concepts of 'wilderness', 'cultural landscape' and 'city'. Thus I propose a second thesis:

*The ambivalence of the interpretations of the Zwischenstadt ('wilderness', 'cultural landscape' and 'city') is due to the fact that the concepts have different meanings in different worldviews.*

In order to systematically identify the different meanings and evaluations of the concepts, it is necessary to ideal typically (re-) construct them from the perspective of different worldviews. For heuristic reasons, I have chosen the perspectives of a liberal, a conservative, a democratic and a romantic worldview.<sup>20</sup> I identify which meanings the concepts of 'wilderness', 'cultural landscape' and 'city' can assume within the framework of each worldview.

14 I have already mentioned that I analyze the German language discourse on the *Zwischenstadt*. This is sensible with regard to a needful limitation of the research subject, and it is absolutely necessary regarding the different meanings the concepts of '(cultural) landscape' and 'wilderness' have in different cultural areas [cf. Dóra DREXLER, "Kulturelle Differenzen der Landschaftswahrnehmung in England, Frankreich, Deutschland und Ungarn" in Thomas KIRCHHOFF and Ludwig TREPL (ed.), *Vieldeutige Natur. Landschaft, Wildnis und Ökosystem als kulturgeschichtliche Phänomene* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2009), 119-135; Denis COSGROVE, "Modernity, Community and the Landscape Idea" in *Journal of Material Culture*, 11, 1/2 (2006): 49-66; Kenneth Robert OLWIG, *Landscape, Nature, and the Body Politics. From Britain's Renaissance to America's New World* (Madison, Wis.: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2002)].

15 See for a more detailed illustration of analogies between 'wilderness' and the *Zwischenstadt* VICENZOTTI & TREPL, *City as Wilderness*, pp. 387-389.

16 SIEVERTS, *Cities Without Cities*, p. 3.

17 VÖCKLER, *Psychoscape*, p. 277.—Apart from the quotes from Thomas Sieverts' book, all other citations of German texts are my translations.

18 SIEVERTS, *Cities Without Cities*, p. 44.

19 Boris SIEVERTS, "Stadt als Wildnis" in Dieter GENSKE and Susanne HAUSER (ed.), *Die Brache als Chance. Ein transdisziplinärer Dialog über verbrauchte Flächen* (Berlin - Heidelberg - New York - Hongkong - London - Mailand - Paris - Tokio: Springer), 205-231.

20 I cannot go into detail here why I have selected these perspectives, I would just like to make one remark: The choice results from a thesis proposed for heuristic and methodical reasons about modernity: All modern worldviews take a stand on the idea of 'progress'. As two extreme positions one can distinguish a progressive, i.e. liberal attitude, and one that is critical towards progress, i.e. a conservative position. Furthermore there are also "third ways". I reconstruct two versions of a third way: a democratic and a romantic worldview.



### First results

(1) One research result is the differentiated delineation of different meanings of the concepts 'wilderness', 'cultural landscape' and 'city'. This delineation constitutes the instrument of analyzing the discourse on the *Zwischenstadt*, but it could also be used for analyzing other debates in landscape and urban planning.

The table below [fig. 2] gives an overview of the meanings I have identified. Using the three criteria of freedom, order and reason, I have formed 36 ideal typical meanings of the concepts 'wilderness', 'cultural landscape' and 'city' from the perspectives of the four worldviews, that is the liberal, the conservative, the democratic and the romantic worldview.<sup>21</sup>

	Liberal Worldview	Conservative Worldview	Democratic Worldview	Romantic Worldview
<b>Wilderness</b>				
Freedom	Wilderness as sphere of the forces of nature, but at the same time of freedom and motor of progress 1	Wilderness as sphere of natural drives and bondage 10	Wilderness as sphere of threatening bondage but also of liberty and emancipation 19	Wilderness as sphere of freedom 28
Order	Wilderness as state of war and chaotic nature 2	Wilderness prevents the genuine perfection of nature 11	Wilderness as sphere of disorder: individualization and excrement interest orientation 20	Wilderness as sphere of liberating disorder 29
Reason	Wilderness as non-exploitable nature 3	Wilderness as fountain of youth and paradise 12	Wilderness as place of irrationality, but also, experiencing sublime nature, of self-assurance of the rational subject 21	Wilderness as sphere of sentiments 30
<b>Cultural Landscape</b>				
Freedom	Cultural landscape as sphere of bondage through social and family ties 4	Cultural landscape as sphere of freedom through social and family ties 13	Cultural landscape as sphere of bondage and at the same time of emancipation 22	Cultural landscape as restricting standstill 31
Order	Cultural landscape as sphere of overcoming the state of war 5	The beautiful cultural landscape as an expression of a good man-nature-relationship 14	Cultural landscape as sphere of order through orientation towards common welfare 23	Cultural landscape as sphere of disenchanted, rigid order 32
Reason	Cultural landscape as resource and symbol of control of nature 6	Cultural landscape as a place of successful cultural development 15	Cultural landscape as place of natural reason and of appropriate simplicity 24	Cultural landscape as sphere subjected to reason 33
<b>City</b>				
Freedom	City as place of freedom 7	City as sphere of bondage through immoderateness 16	City as sphere of freedom and of realized emancipation 25	City as as sphere of freedom 34
Order	City as the right way to overcome the state of war 8	City as place of universal equality and (therefore) disorder 17	City as sphere of order between naturalness and artificiality 26	City as sphere of enchanted disorder 35
Reason	City as sphere of reasonable, competition driven exploitation of nature. 9	City as place of immoderate progress of civilization 18	City as sphere of reason, oriented towards common welfare 27	City as refuge from the disenchantment and as space beyond the reach of reason 36

[fig. 2] Delineation of the different meanings of the (metaphorical) readings of the *Zwischenstadt*.

Without going into detail explaining all identified meanings, I would like to call attention to two aspects: First, we can see that within different worldviews, 'wilderness' has *different, even contradictory meanings*. In the conservative worldview for example, 'wilderness' can assume the meaning of bondage (meaning 10), whereas in the romantic perspective, 'wild nature' is regarded as the sphere of freedom (meaning 28). Second, 'wilderness' can for example be interpreted as disorder, but disorder itself can be *evaluated differently*: It is either, as within the democratic worldview, condemned as an expression of individualization and excrement interest orientation (meaning 20), or, as from the romantic perspective, it is supported as liberating relief from a rigid and hostile order of worth (meaning 29).

(2) In the analysis of current planners' and architects' statements about the *Zwischenstadt* I have focused on the basic attitude of the qualifiers. Thus I have only examined statements by representatives of the attitude of qualification, asking which of the 36 identified meanings is implied in them. Among other conclusions, it is noticeable that the attitude of the qualifiers is heterogeneous with regard to the worldviews, i. e. *all* worldviews occur in statements of the qualifiers, even and quite prominent the *romantic* tradition. This is striking, because one might have regarded the romantic worldview as obsolete.

<sup>21</sup> Although the focus of my dissertation lies on the analysis of the metaphor 'wilderness' for the *Zwischenstadt*, I have also analyzed meanings of two other readings, 'cultural landscape' and 'city'—for two reasons: first, the meanings of 'wilderness' can be best elucidated against the background of the other two concepts, and second one single statement very often contains meanings of more than just one concept, so that for its analysis one has to consider all three concepts.



However, the strategy of the qualifiers to approach the *Zwischenstadt* with a “new view”<sup>22</sup> is a reminder of the tradition of *romanticizing* the world: The unbiased and open-minded view aims at discovering hidden qualities of the world and our urban landscapes. One has to search for the extraordinary in everyday life, for the bewildering in banalities and for the weird in the well-known. For both, the qualifiers as well as the romanticists, the “new view” tends to a “qualitative raising to a higher power (*qualitative Potenzierung*)” (Novalis) of (the urban) reality.<sup>23</sup> In this spirit, Boris Sieverts states for example: “The wild peripheries of the big cities are [...] one of the last big adventures, they are the unexplored, from the sublime to the unimposing, they are full of surprises and secrets”.<sup>24</sup>

### *A closer look at the methods*

The thesis is designed to be a *discourse analysis*. Thus, my subject is not the physical object of the *Zwischenstadt* consisting of streets, houses, fields, woods, rivers, farmlands, clarification and power plants, shopping malls, parking lots etc. Rather, I deal with (design) ideas, concepts and statements of planners and architects. I am interested in the origin of these ideas and how they have influenced each other because ultimately these ideas have an impact on the design and planning practice. The conception of discourse is largely derived from the work of French philosopher Michel Foucault.<sup>25</sup> Livingstone, referring to Foucault, “explains discourses as broad systems of thought, which inform how we conceive of the world and gain practical expression in regulative institutions; they are vehicles of social power and serve as strategies of moral manipulation.”<sup>26</sup> Gregory defines discourse as a “specific series of representations, practices and performances through which meanings are produced, connected and legitimized.”<sup>27</sup>

My approach of ordering the discourse on the *Zwischenstadt* comprises the analysis of the *logic of construction* of different concepts and positions. I will not address the issues of power and institutionalized practices, which means that I will not look for sociological or psychological explanations. They are very important and crucial aspects of discourse, but analyzing them would mean to go beyond the scope of the thesis. Instead, I analyze the history of ideas of current concepts and examine the relation between them, paying special attention to possibilities of combination, to contradictions and relations of exclusion. I have decided to focus on the concepts’ logic of construction (which seems to concur more or less with Popper’s “world 3”) because of its relevance for democratic and transparent planning processes: Often, conflicts in planning processes are not only conflicts of interests, they are also an expression of differing ideas of ‘city’, of the relationship between man and nature, of ‘landscape’ etc., i.e. these conflicts ultimately derive from or are at least nourished by a clash of divergent worldviews.

That is why my thesis includes the aspect of *worldviews* in its discourse analysis. I will sketch in this section how I have distinguished the different meanings of the concepts ‘wilderness’, ‘cultural landscape’ and ‘city’ with the aid of worldviews. I have set up what could be called the “grammar” of each worldview: I have elaborated the founding structure, the specific order of worth by using the above introduced concepts of ‘freedom’, ‘order’ and ‘reason’ as criteria for the illustration of the worldviews. I have done that with the aid of secondary but also primary literature about classical liberal, conservative, democratic and romantic (political) philosophies identifying “grammarians”, that is protagonists or representative thinkers for each worldview. “The grammarians come from political philosophy where the founding principles [...] are articulated in a systematic way.”<sup>28</sup> I have depicted the worldviews by illustrating the different concepts of ‘wilderness’, ‘cultural landscape’ and ‘city’. For that purpose I had to interpret the grammarians’ theories asking which role ‘wilderness’ (respectively the natural condition of mankind), ‘cultural landscape’ (or a feudal country life) and ‘city’ (respectively civilization, the society under a social contract, life in a modern metropolis) play in them. In doing so, it has been possible to distinguish and define the different meanings of the three concepts in a systematic way.

Until now, I have spoken almost parenthetically about the ideal typical (re-) construction of positions and worldviews. However, the method of the *ideal types* is crucial for my approach: I form ideal types (1) of the (metaphorical) readings of the *Zwischenstadt* (the concepts of ‘wilderness’, ‘cultural landscape’ and ‘city’) and (2) of the three basic attitudes towards urban sprawl (the positions of the opponents, the qualifiers and the enthusiasts).

22 The importance of the ‘new view’ for the attitude of the qualifiers is expressed by the fact that Bormann et al. title a chapter, in which they explain preconditions of their attitude, “*Der Neue Blick*” (“the new view”) (BORMANN et al., *Zwischen Stadt Entwerfen*, p. 47).

23 “The world must be romanticized. In this way one rediscovers the original meaning, romanticizing is nothing but a qualitative raising to a higher power [*Potenzierung*]. [...] Insofar as I give the commonplace a higher meaning, the ordinary a mysterious countenance, the known the dignity of the unknown, the finite an appearance of infinity, I romanticize it.” (NOVALIS, as cited in Jane KELLER, “Novalis’ Other Way Out” in Nikolas KOMPRIDIS (ed.), *Philosophical Romanticism* (London – New York: Routledge, 2006), 196-213, p. 202.)

24 Boris SIEVERTS, “Wahrnehmung und Erfahrung des Ungestalteten. Vom Reichtum des Informellen” in *deutsche bauzeitung*, 137/7 (2003): 54-57, p. 55.

25 Michel FOUCAULT, *Archaeology of knowledge* (London - New York: Routledge, 1969/2007); Michel FOUCAULT, “The Order of Discourse” in Robert YOUNG (ed.), *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972/1981), 48-78.

26 Michael JONES, “The Concept of Cultural Landscape: Discourse and Narratives” in Hannes PALANG and Gary FRY (ed.), *Landscape Interfaces. Cultural Heritage in Changing Landscapes* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), 21-51, p. 25.

27 Derek GREGORY, 2000, as cited in *ibid.*

28 Niels ALBERTSEN, “From Calvin to Spinoza. The New Spirit of Capitalism” in *Distinktion*, 11 (2005), 67-81, p. 72, referring to BOLTANSKI and THÉVENOT—As the grammarian of liberalism I have referred to Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), for the reconstruction of conservatism, I have looked at the theories of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl (1823-1897) and Oswald Spengler (1880-1936). I have used Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) as the grammarian for the democratic worldview and several German artists and intellectuals as grammarians of romanticism (e.g. Carl Gustav Carus, 1789-1869; Caspar David Friedrich, 1744-1840; Novalis, 1772-1801; August Wilhelm von Schlegel, 1767-1845; Friedrich von Schlegel, 1772-1829; Johann Ludwig Tieck, 1773-1853).



The method of ideal types has been developed by Max Weber. In his study *'Objectivity' in Social Science and Social Policy* (originally published in 1904), he describes the nature of the ideal type and how it is gained: "An ideal type is formed by the one-sided *accentuation* of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent *concrete individual* phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified *analytical* construct (*Gedankenbild*). In its conceptual purity, this mental construct (*Gedankenbild*) cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality. It is a *utopia*."<sup>29</sup>

Ideal types are a conceptual instrument to order discourse. They must not be misunderstood as pigeonholing (as types are no classes). They rather describe poles that real positions can never reach, only approach more or less. The real theories, statements and concepts float like point clouds around the center of the ideal types; some of them approximate it pretty much, others remain far away from it. Ideal types contribute to discourse analysis by spanning a spectrum of well defined potential positions. Thus the concepts architects and planners use in reality, their concrete attitudes, are never identical with the *ideal* types, they rather combine elements from different ideal types. With their aid one can identify in what respect the real positions differ from each other because it is possible to clearly define the *combination* of elements from different ideal types integrated within the real statements. Thus it is not a criterion for the quality of an ideal type whether it can be found in reality or not. A well formed ideal type rather has to be *fruitful*, i.e. it must help to explain and understand the concepts and attitudes found in reality.

### Conclusion: Transcending the discipline

The discipline of urbanism can be transcended into two directions: One can go beyond what could be called the classical body of knowledge in urbanism integrating knowledge of (1) either other applied or application oriented sciences (e.g. traffic and landscape planning, nature conservation etc.) or (2) of the humanities (e.g. cultural sciences). However, as implied in the term 'trans-disciplinarity', in contrast to 'inter-' or 'multi-disciplinarity', in the discipline of urbanism both ways interact: Trends in the design practice are topics of theoretical reflection of, in and for urban design, and theory (in the sense of meta-theory) can influence the practice of planning and designing urban landscapes.

My PhD work is designed to analyze the practice of urbanism from the perspective of the cultural sciences. Its methods clearly belong to the methodical repertoire of the cultural studies, just as most of its aims are typical for research in the field of cultural sciences. However, if it were a classical study in this field, the discourse on the *Zwischenstadt* would simply be regarded as one exemplary setting where controversies typical for modernity are being fought out. But for me, the debate about how to deal with the urban landscapes is more than just an example - it is the really relevant issue.<sup>30</sup> My thesis should help open-minded planners and architects to come up with innovative design strategies enhancing the quality of life in urban landscapes.

I cannot go here into further detail about the interplay of theoretical reflection and design practice. I would just like to hint at Eisel, who is asking that design proposals should be discussed and analyzed as a "principle of stimulation and as a means of vitalization"<sup>31</sup>. "Design proposals can help to reflect conceptually; especially the person they come from can learn to understand them as a reference to himself [or herself], to his [or her] lifestyle and ethical principles. That does not improve his [or her] talent, but his [or her] conceptual certainty and vibrancy, i.e. his [or her] clarity."<sup>32</sup> About an analysis with that direction of impact, i.e. with the aim of "using the political and epistemological qualities of design"<sup>33</sup>, Eisel states: "One would have to attempt to intellectually catch up with the completed process of aesthetical objectivation. Not in order to find rules of design, this is barking up the wrong tree, [...] but in order to track down what is the ideological basis of the design example."<sup>34</sup> To do this, one does not need to possess design skills. "What the design expresses is deciphered 'hermeneutically', and the hermeneutics will be as good as the interpreter is as a humanist, not as a designer, i.e. how big and professional his [or her] knowledge based on cultural theory is."<sup>35</sup>

This rationale reveals how I hope that my work might influence the design practice. I try to bring together design attitudes from the discourse on the *Zwischenstadt* with theories from cultural and political sciences dealing with different worldviews; i.e. I try to analyze the ideological content of these attitudes and to find a new order for the discourse on urban landscapes. Thus, the discourse analysis is not an end in itself - it can hopefully contribute to animate the design practice and to improve the quality of life in our urban landscapes.

29 Max WEBER, "'Objectivity' in Social Science and Social Policy" in Edward A. SHILS and Henry A. FINCH (ed.), *The Methodology of the Social Sciences. Max Weber* (New York: The Free Press, 1904/1949), 50-112, p. 90, italics in original.

30 That does not mean that studies in the field of urbanism are not interesting for research in the cultural sciences. However, the scientific interests of both fields, urbanism on the one hand and humanities such as cultural studies on the other hand, are categorically different: The former ultimately strives after improving our (build) environment whereas the latter aims at understanding cultural phenomena. Of course, in order to design livable environments one needs to understand the respective culture, but for urbanism this knowledge is never an end in itself, it is always just a means to achieve its real goal.

31 Ulrich EISEL, „Unbestimmte Stimmungen und bestimmte Unstimmigkeiten. Über die guten Gründe der deutschen Landschaftsarchitektur für die Abwendung von der Wissenschaft und die schlechten Gründe für ihre intellektuelle Abstinenz - mit Folgerungen für die Ausbildung in diesem Fach" in Stefan BERNARD and Philipp SATTLER, *Vor der Tür. Aktuelle Landschaftsarchitektur aus Berlin* (München: Callwey, 1997), 17-33, p. 25.

32 Ibid., p. 26.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid., p. 25.

35 Ibid., p. 26.