

# Qualitative Research as a Perspective for Urban Open Space Planning

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## Abstract

In the twentieth century, German open space planning was based mainly on quantitative arguments. The recent change of attitudes and ideas in society and space has led to a discussion of 'quality instead of quantity' in politics and landscape architecture. However, this alteration has until now remained focused on concrete objects without grasping the changed nature of the general purposes and concepts of open space in an urban landscape.

These fundamentally changed relationships are the topics of research in the social, cultural and economic sciences with the help of specific – so called qualitative – methods. In the largest possible spectrum of perspective considerations, that which is under investigation is not submitted to inductive measurement or deductive derivation, but to 'abductive' interpretation. In this approach, with the help of certain technologies, unknowns are searched for and a new structure of relationships is being developed. In doing this, qualitative science not only affects the understanding of the cultural context, but also, because of its methodological requirements, the ideas behind landscape architecture.

Using Berlin as an example, a process of qualitative open space planning is introduced, with which contemporary, structural qualities and purposes of open space are defined and categorized. Although the categories stemming from these qualitative methods have a narrow regional context, the methods of this investigation and their perspectives are applicable for other cities as well.

*Urban Green Open Space / Berlin / Structural analysis / Qualitative Research / Abduction*

## 1. Problem

Social and spatial changes have led to a change in the arguments for legitimating open space. Quantitative arguments alone are not sufficient, so qualitative ones are called for. How can we generate them?

Once a privilege of nobility, urban open spaces were taken over by the bourgeoisie and then, in the nineteenth century, were offered to the industrial proletariat as compensation. In the twentieth century, these spaces were claimed as public property by a more equal and affluent society and, finally, presented as a means of ecological balance and as a 'soft' location factor to a service-based society.

Various forms of arguments for the legitimization of urban open space have been introduced over the last decades: hygienic, social, cultural, military, educational, aesthetic, functional, ecological, and economic. Based on these criteria, it has been possible to develop both qualitative and, above all, quantitative urban green space demands. One of the first proponents of quantitative methods was Martin Wagner, who considered the struggle for urban green space as a fight for square metres (Wagner 1915). These quantitative demands got so far that in the twentieth century it was declared that it is impossible to have too much open space (Spitthöver 1982, Ermer 1985, Selle 1999).

But this kind of quantitative thinking has been challenged by the recent structural change towards a post-industrial society that implied new opinions of urban space and the importance of nature in cities. The debate was then raised anew about the future possibilities of open space as: an element of public infrastructure; a potential for recreation; public property; part of public space; an element within the metropolitan structure; an expression of urban culture; a symbol of society; an object of aesthetic perception; an economic factor and product; space for an ecological balance; and a fundamental responsibility of the profession of landscape architecture.

Open space is used here briefly for 'urban green open space', which is indeed more than just parks. What is special – and contradictory – about it? It is left not only as a relict of nature or of cultural landscapes, such as shorelines, hills, hunting areas or woods in built-up areas, but also as a result of urban dynamism, such as unused properties, gaps resulting from war damage or future construction sites. Open space is planned as an element of urban growth, such as

plazas, boulevards or street trees, as well as being an adversary of urban growth, such as public parks and green corridors. It is created as a part of public infrastructure or as grounds for public facilities, but also as a buffer between intensively used areas like front gardens, median strips or restricted building areas. Open space is preserved as nature or as cultural heritage but is also used as a compensation for losses in environmental qualities, for example by fresh-air corridors, water protection areas or planned biotopes.

This means that open space is both the building block – or constituent places – of a city, but is also other places – a ‘counter-site’ – of that city at the same time: “There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places – places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society – which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted.” (Foucault 1967)

Hence, open space has no absolute function and significance, but always merely relative qualities – relative, first of all, to the coherence of the urban surroundings (Jacobs 1961). Conceptual definitions of open space characteristics and structures, on the basis of single consistent functions (e.g., ‘socially relevant open space’), become a problem when they no longer describe the complex and paradoxical nature of open space.

In contrast with that approach, a topical open space structural analysis aims at answering the following questions: Which political goals and communal activities are assigned to this open space? Which categories of open space are distinct in a political and planning sense? How are these categories to be assigned in urban and social space? Which of these categories should continue to be publicly financed and which can or should be organized privately? What type and to what degree is public engagement necessary for the provision, running and development of open space? Which institutional regulations are necessary? Which concrete participatory possibilities and conceptual tasks are discernible?

## 2. Method

Qualitative processes may help us to discover relevant criteria and categories for a renewed structural concept of urban open space. Qualitative research is an empirical method of the applied social sciences. The approach is orientated towards an everyday description of practical problems in social structures instead of theoretical (or political-ideological) explanations of the social conditions of a social structure. An example would be the need of the market to understand consumer behaviour on a social structural basis in order to define and clearly reach groups of customers. While an interpretation of quantitative social structural analysis is especially well suited for illustrating the change in living conditions, and deals with the classical questions of demography, mobility, education, prosperity and integration, qualitative social structural analysis can explain the change in social environments, lifestyle and values (Hradil 1987). The objects of the qualitative investigation are not subjected to an inductive measurement or deductive diversion, but are instead sub-



Figure 1 Urban green open space must be newly legitimized as part of structural changes in society.

ject to an interpretation which is known as abduction: “Deduction proves that something must be; Induction shows that something actually is operative; Abduction merely suggests that something may be.” (Peirce 1955: 171) The method of abduction looks specifically for new and unknown things with the help of certain techniques. It makes suppositions to create a design that refers directly to the circumstances of the investigation. Many possible interpretations can arise from such a critical procedure. These will be investigated as part of a continuing qualitative analysis for relationships, i.e. common characteristics, and are then put together in groups, or so-called ‘clusters’. New categories are thus created based on common characteristics and not on differences.

Two different approaches are followed below. First, a contextual part describes the spatial reality of societal change in inductive and deductive conclusions on open space theory (section 3 below). Next, a perspectival part opens the spatial possibility of future functions and the meaning of open space in a qualitative structural analysis of current guiding principles within urban development using abductive conclusions (section 4 below). Finally, these two elements – spatial reality and spatial possibility – flow together into a typological and instrumental concept (section 5 below).

## 3. Changes in Urban Society and Space

Contemporary society is experiencing an economic change from an affluent and industrial society to a worldwide service-based society. Analyses of the spatial reality of urban society and urban space indicate that this change is being accompanied and increased by spatial polarization within cities, which in the end affects the population’s social chances – as Häußermann & Kapphann (2000) have found regarding Berlin. Global competition regarding location, social polarization and a changed understanding of the role of the state and its financial predicament have led to urban politics concentrating on activities such as economic support, or social inclusion and control.



Figure 2 Urban green space as a scene of communal political activity. Ground breaking at Pallaspark, neighbourhood management in Berlin-Schöneberg



Figure 3 Lifestyles and living situations create parallel universes that must be overcome in urban meta-cultures. Pallaspark in Berlin-Schöneberg.

In contrast subsidized public infrastructures for the masses disappear step by step from the agenda. In Berlin, this type of politics concentrates in a spatial sense on problem areas at the inner-city edge, large housing estates, the urban fringes and on central urban areas considered to be preferred growth areas.

These changed demands for political action stipulate thematic, social and spatial settings for open space design. A change in perceptions and values in everyday life, however, also has an influence on possible policies. Increasing individualism as well as the differentiation of lifestyles are seemingly irreversible. If these changes in living situations lead to differentiation and polarization, the change of social environments can thus strengthen these processes, and yet it also has some potential to correct them.

Social inequality today is manifested in lifestyles which are increasingly a matter of choice, but at the same time in living situations which are predominantly not a matter of choice (Hradil 1987). This possibility of choice, together with specific living situations, creates a new potential for social commitments. Urban space repre-

sents a basis for this commitment by offering functions independent of specific groups and meaning in addition to its characteristic variety. From this it is possible to derive certain implied tasks: Open space should offer the possibility of creating pluralist, lifestyle-based spatial identities and compensation for situational disadvantages. At the same time it has to use the urban potential for integration and synchronization of common spheres and the utilization of space.

#### 4. Possibility Analysis: Models

The method of qualitative open space structural analysis needs to be explained. In general, text serves as a database in qualitative research; by 'text', a broad field of semantic symbols is understood, including text, pictures, architecture, etc. These texts may be obtained from interviews, observation or documents.

Questionnaires or observations are useful for exploring changing needs in the wider population. If subsidization of the masses is no longer on the urban open space policy agenda, such explorations become less and less helpful. The conditions of urban development have changed – and so have the models. To analyse that change, current models of urban development can serve as data for a qualitative structural analysis. Thus it should be possible to reintegrate the concepts of urban open space planning with the goals of urban development.

For this process, a number of different models of urban development have been put together as a database (see Table 1). Models are ideal images, which can be individually internalized and collectively conveyed, thus serving to motivate and acting as an aid to making decisions and choosing action (Hoffmann, Marz 2003). Here, the current models of urban development are not considered as a binding target for the structuring of open space but instead, in their plurality as a means of orientation that opens a path and a horizon (Lefebvre 1970), as perspectives of a qualitative structural analysis.

To overcome existing categories also requires an interpretive procedure that leaves behind the security of the inductive generalization and deductive derivation of classical processes (Bude 2000). Hence, the potential of the space revealed in models of urban development is not simply scrutinized for explicit evidence of open space structure, nor is it derived directly from the models. On the contrary, it is assumed that it is exactly those assertions made by the models which do not explicitly deal with the question of open space, but which do contain those new, foreign, divergent and unexpected elements that qualitative research is trying to find as a source of knowledge (Flick et al. 2000).

Such a process of interpretation unites science with art, in which art is understood as “dealing with ambiguities, understanding restrictions and mixing separates [...] as an experiencing of the truth” (Bude 2000: 570). This corresponds with Charles Sanders Peirce’s method of abductive conclusion. This is a knowledge-broadening, creative process that neither logically nor empirically desires to prove that something actually exists, but instead assumes that it exists. Abductive reasoning introduces a new idea in order to understand a unfamiliar phenomenon and is thus “a moment in the design of a world” (Bude 2000: 572).



**City archipelago**

Berlin's strength consists in its fragmentation, contrasts and diversity. Ungers, Kollhoff, Koolhaas and Rowe's model from 1977 picture an archipelago of urban islands with autonomous history, social structures, spatial qualities and identities. (Ungers 1984:255)

**Well-balanced city**

The preparatory land-use plan of Berlin determines a model of equivalent living-conditions in grown urban structures full of contrast. (FNP Berlin 1994)

**City is a stage**

The former Federal Culture Minister Weiss postulates an urban culture which includes the demands of business location, educational and social benefits, an international consciousness and integration. This urban culture must be learned and stage-managed. (Weiss 1999)

**Civil city**

An official expertise, promoted by the European Community, specifies competitive ability, labour, knowledge, youth, technologies, immigration, social cohesion, ecology, system transformation, city networking and a civil society as main challenges. (BerlinStudie 2000)

**Third city**

In his widely discussed book "Third City", Hoffmann-Axthelm claims a new article of agreement for the town with a limitation of built-up area as 'ecological imperative' and an uncovering and reuse of historical structures. (Hoffmann-Axthelm 1993)

**Generic city**

Rem Koolhaas discloses a new urbanism which causes confusion but mirrors any option by handling infrastructure deliberately. (Koolhaas 1996; 1999)

**City of the heterotope**

Brenner's urbanization concept for estates of prefabricated houses deploys Foucault's 'Heterotopias' (counter-sites), to establish significant places in a strategy of 'acupuncture'. (Brenner 1995)

**Public city**

The first draft of an urban development plan (UDP) 'Public Space' defines urban form as a matter of availability and readability. (StEP ÖR 1995)

**City of dialogue**

The official masterplan for downtown Berlin shall overcome the Cold-War division in a dialog of 'critical reconstruction' of the historic town structure. (Planwerk Innenstadt 1997; 1999)

**City as a business**

The German local government association KGSt supports communities with progressive concepts of administration ('Neues Steuerungsmodell'). Thus civil service becomes a product instead of a sovereign task. (KGSt 1993)

**City of themes**

The Capital City Marketing of Berlin campaigns a new, creative, liveable metropolis of culture between east and west. (Partner für Berlin 2002)

**Sustainable city**

Sustainability includes ecological, economical and social resources. In mature cities, it focuses on social integration, management of resources, urban live and democracy. (Hall, Pfeiffer 2000)

**City of normality**

Lampugnani's city of normality asks for a different use of the ancient town with new urban elements, but also traditional spaces. Not the showplaces, but the simple continuity of the quarters constitutes the city. (Lampugnani 2001)

**Open city**

The German sociologist Ulrich Beck ('reflexive modernisation', with Giddens and Lash) hopes for an open city with a culture of 'convivial places', 'high-urban lifestyles' and experimental architecture. (Beck 1993; 1994; 1996)

**New urban city**

In 1987, Häußermann and Siebel described in "New Urbanity" already the consequences of shrinking cities. A policy of stabilisation and emancipation provides possibilities for better living-conditions, living space, participation, self-help and open 'cultural zones'. (Häußermann, Siebel 1987)

**Social city**

Socially Integrative City is a programme to counteract the widening socio-spatial rifts in the cities. The programme bundles governmental resources in socially problematic areas and stimulates private engagements. (Döhne, Walter 1999)

**Global city**

Sassen's model describes a city of strategic diversity of cultures and a division of labour between centers with headquarters and non-business service sectors. (Sassen 1997)

**Shrinking city**

The Bauhaus Dessau Foundation published a model for the upcoming shrinking cities. Perforated and heterogeneous, mysterious inner-city hybrids of town and landscape are arising, waiting for private occupancy. (Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau 2001)

**Zwischenstadt**

(engl. translation as Cities without Cities) Sieverts "Zwischenstadt" requests an aesthetic access to city regions as readable landscapes to qualify the sprawl. (Sieverts 1997)

**Table 1** An overview of the models of urban development relevant to the discourse of urban development in Berlin. The database for the qualitative analysis consists of the original source texts.

Abduction cannot be forced according to a specific procedural programme, but can be promoted through certain strategies and a specific attitude. To achieve this, Peirce induced situations of real doubt and insecurity, as well as the free wandering of the spirit, as possibilities (Reichertz 2000). A precondition for this is to take the existing data absolutely seriously and, on the other hand, to question present knowledge. The large quantity of different and new ideas created in this abductive process are arranged with one another

so that connections (aggregations) of the higher and highest order can be created. Validity and relevance justify a qualitative analysis of maximal variation – in the sense of variability, not of representation according to numbers – as well as the appropriateness of the investigation, choice of method and evaluation. Its results must be inter-subjectively comprehensible, coherent in the sense of consistency and contradiction. The results stand for themselves – whichever societal importance they may have is certainly open to discussion.

.. Stabilizing Green . Decentralized Green . Self-determined Green . Renewal Green . Bearable Green . Expansion Green . Experimental Green . Extensive Green . Family Green . Precaution Green . Flair Green . Flexible Green . Federal Green . Progress Green . Uncovered Green . Liberty Green . Leisure Green . Peaceful Green . Functional Green . Holistic Green . Guarantee Green . Inviting Green . District Green . Remembrance Green . Network Green . Emotionalizing Green . Counter-site Green . Mystical Green . Beloved Green . Community Green . Cultivated Green . Framework Green . Grown Green . Balance Green . Consistent Green . Equivalent Green . Coincident Green . Structuring Green . Transboundary Green . Metropolitan Green . Basic function Green . Re-Evaluation Green . Adventure Green . Hospitable Green . Common Green ...

Table 2 An extract of the 469 abductive combinations of model concepts with the addendum 'green'

And yet, a qualitative analysis demands more than a simple descriptive sequencing of phenomena. As a theory, its results must not be empirically secure but nonetheless argumentatively logical (Flick *et al* 2000).

### Procedure and Results

In the next step of the qualitative analysis, from the models of urban development described in Table 1, such terms that are relevant to the message of the particular model are emphasized. For all models and concepts within the models, the following citation from Häußermann & Siebel's *New Urban City* gives an example: "Decreasing densities of use and population provide space for a life that was long impossible in large cities. Stability, small-scale traffic networks, decentralization and more self-determination, but also the humanization of professional work" (Häußermann & Siebel 1987: 202).

In the abductive conclusion, such notions are selected from the texts which can then be meaningfully projected onto the entity of 'urban green open space'. This means nothing more than that a meaning is revealed through combination of the concept with the addendum 'green'. In the quoted example by Häußermann & Siebel, stability, decentralization and self-determination are generally held concepts related to a huge number of relationships and can be linked to the concept of open space (as 'stabilizing green', 'decentralized green', 'self-determined green') so that a meaning becomes evident. Small-scale and humanization are exclusively related to certain themes, namely traffic networks or professional work, and are therefore not included. No meaningful connection with open space can be made from space and life (as 'spatial green', 'living green' are tautological and convey no further sense). Using abductive conclusion, 469 combinations (thereunder 143 multiple nominations) with the addendum 'green' were selected from the texts of all the current models of urban development in the database (see Table 2).

In qualitative analysis it is assumed that a previously unknown structure is hidden within this open collection of terms that can give meaning to the entity under investigation – in this case, open space. This structure becomes obvious then by highlighting relationships between the terms and by pooling all terms into clusters. For example, 'Hospitable Green' and 'Common Green' (from the as-

Qualities	Examples for clustered terms
Cohesion, Integration	Hospitable Green, Common Green, Family Green, Peaceful Green, Holistic Green, Inviting Green, Community Green, Hospitable Green, Common Green, ...
Compensation	Bearable Green, ...
Possibility	Flexible Green, Transboundary Green, ...
Indecision	Mystical Green, ...
Experiment	Experimental Green, Progress Green, ...
Contrast	Counter-site Green, ...
Permanence (time), Green, Generality (spatial)	Renewal Green, Cultivated Green, Grown Green, Consistent Green, Coincident Green, Re-Evaluation Green, ...
Involuntary	Vacant Green, Cancelled Green ...
Extensiveness	Extensive Green, ...
Profitability	Functional Green, ...
Significance, Legibility, Orientation	Uncovered Green, District Green, Metropolitan Green, ...
Compression	Concentrated Green, ...
Freedom	Self-determined Green, Liberty Green, ...
Mixture	Complex Green, Synergie Green, ...
Stabilization, Protection	Stabilizing Green, Precaution Green, Guarantee Green, Balance Green, Equivalent Green, Basic function Green
Network	Decentralized Green, Federal Green, Network Green, Framework Green, Structuring Green, ...
Identity	Remembrance Green, Beloved Green, ...
Variety	Leisure Green, ...
Stimulation, Activation	Re-Evaluation Green, Adventure Green, Expansion Green, Flair Green, Emotionalizing Green, Adventure Green, ...

Table 3 Condensation of all terms extracted from the models of urban development into nineteen programmatic qualities of urban open space

semblage in Table 2) could be combined according to the quality of connection or rather integration. 'Re-evaluation Green' and 'Adventure Green', as two further examples, both describe stimulation – or rather activation – as a quality; that means, they point to the same direction. All the collected terms are thus assorted into clusters by such relationships of thematic or suggestive proximity. Finally, the assemblage of 326 different 'greens' is condensed into a list of nineteen programmatic qualities (Table 3).

In the next step, these different programmatic qualities (clusters of terms based on relationships) of open space are then further linked to higher level connections by searching for groups which can each form their own categories of legitimization (or planning) for open space. As a result, these groups (clusters of qualities based on aims) create the following five categories:

**Open Green:** 'autonomous open space' – emphasis on freedom, possibility, extensiveness, experimentation

**Directing Green:** 'reuniting open space' – emphasis on identity, mixture, cohesion and integration, stimulation, compensation, stabilization and protection



Figure 4 Open Green is communally created, maximally unregulated, unspectacular urban green space.



Figure 5 Directing Green is an urban area of action episodically defined through social monitoring and political goals.

**Texture Green:** ‘framework-building open space’ – emphasis on significance, networking, permanence, compression (increased density), contrast

**Product Green:** ‘marketable open space’ – emphasis on profitability and variety

**Latent Green:** ‘problematic open space’ – emphasis on involuntary and indecision

As a result of a qualitative structural analysis, these categories of planning are at first a proposal of a design process, a presumption. The inter-subjective validity of this presumption must be reviewed in a further examination. This is done in a final step as an elaboration of a structural concept that substantiates the created categories and that implicates all the deducible requirements of described social and spatial changes.

## 5. Concept

In the following concept, a programmatic definition for each of the five planning categories is developed which again takes into account the dedicated programmatic qualities (see Table 3). The interaction of these programmes with the analysis of social and spatial change in Berlin leads to specific conceptual formulations (summarized in Table 4).

The main feature of that concept is that the new categories do not need a functionalist ‘either/or’, but a differential ‘as well as’ status. This ‘as well as’ quality becomes clear when, for example, the aspect of time is taken into consideration. The temporal dynamic of Open Green is one of opening and unfolding, as it is developing in an open process. Directing Green is episodic, as it overlaps other open space categories within a defined period of time. Texture Green is long-term because one of its qualities lies in permanence. Product Green is cyclical because it is dependent on the develop-

ment of the market, on supply and demand. Finally, Latent Green is a temporary condition that can lead to other open space categories and to other urban uses. These five categories can also, therefore, overlap one another spatially: Product Green needs Open Green – because this is where innovation occurs – as well as Directing Green – because here socially-orientated market corrections are possible. Product Green is based on the spatial qualities of other open space categories. Lastly, Latent Green refers to the potential that Texture Green, Open Green and Product Green have and which ‘lurks’ within them if their specific qualities have become invalid.

Open Green (Fig. 4) is completely unregulated and unspectacular communal open space, in which the qualities of freedom, possibility, extensiveness and experimentation are brought together. New spaces for action and experimentation are created here through deregulation, thus nature and civilization could meet as spheres of freedom. The conceptual roles of Open Green are possibilities for informal management in ‘free zones of action’ (e.g., informal trade, music and gaming) and the elimination of mono-functional and exclusive uses, through ‘unspectacular openings’ (e.g., street festivals, blade-nights and boating on the waterways). In open space planned by the category of Open Green, existing regulations are changed by way of trial and ‘experimental zones’ (e.g. in waste allotments, cemeteries and parks). These spaces are re-dedicated as ‘undetermined nature’ (e.g., with unkempt meadows or scrub encroachment) through a reduction of regulations, maintenance and infrastructure.

Directing Green (Fig. 5) is an urban area of action episodically defined through social monitoring and political goals. The qualities of mixture, compensation, stimulation, identity, connections and stabilization are united here. New connections and relationships can be created in this type of open space through hospitality. Compensation can be activated and, through the clarity of innova-





Figure 6 (above) Texture Green is a long-term entity that completes and clarifies urban structure.

Figure 7 (below) Product Green consists of privately or publicly offered and refinanced urban green space.

tive human-nature networks, the dependence of culture on nature – and vice versa – can be articulated. The conceptual roles of Directing Green are general usability for all population groups by a breaking of ‘dominant structures’ (e.g., the drug scene, dog owners, but also ‘city cops’), integration of underprivileged or sought-after groups using ‘reserved exclusivity’ (e.g., exclusive facilities for families and immigrants). Where large-scale infrastructure collides with small local forms, Directing Green lessens the shock of contact through ‘mediating open space’ (e.g., new types of intensive, densely, non-recreative urban open space). It is a general compensation for the impositions of urban living in ‘rare banalities’ (e.g. simple things like the possibility to walk barefoot) and conveying authentic nature-culture relationships in ‘innovative nature’.



Figure 8 Latent Green is the problematic consequence of modernization within cities.

Texture Green (Fig. 6) is long-term open space that completes and clarifies urban structure. It unites the qualities of significance, networking, permanence, increased density and contrast. Within it, open space is constructed and reconstructed through implicit open structures as an expression, element and framework of urban culture, where nature and aesthetic works meet as a result of urban landscape architecture. The conceptual role of Texture Green is an organisation of the city in readable and permeable spaces through ‘implicit urban open space structures’ (e.g., thinning out plants of urban boulevards, reconstruction of front gardens in main thoroughfares). Texture Green constitutes mixture, increasing density and rhythm within urban space through ‘dovetailing of city and park’ (e.g., buildings at the boundary of parks). It also serves in dismantling oversized spaces to create those of appropriate urban proportions through critical reconstruction of human-scale space. In the category of Texture Green, public space is restituted through ‘reconstruction of mono-functional space’ (e.g., by opening up industrial or administration areas – such as universities). Here, the special qualities of urban nature find expression in a ‘culture of qualitative density’ (e.g., boulevards and parks that allow ‘love parades’ or similar). The synthesis of urban nature and culture becomes readable in an ‘urban topography’ (e.g., by cutting-free viewpoints over the urban landscape) and a ‘permanent cultural landscape’ (e.g., by preserving historical field structures and boundaries in housing development areas).

Product Green (Fig. 7) consists of privately or publicly offered and refinanced open space. Its qualities are profitability and variety. Through market-based mechanisms, optimization and diversity are regulated and through the supply of events, nature becomes a product. The conceptual roles of Product Green are preservation of urban character through variety, mixture and publicness, development of consumer sovereignty by offering variety and the strength of demand, and replacement of unwarranted and uncontrolled subsidies.

Category of Planning	Open Green	Directing Green	Texture Green	Product Green	Latent Green
dynamic	unfolding	episodic	long-term	cyclical	temporary
characteristics	communally created, maximally unregulated and unspectacular	defined through social monitoring and political goals	permanent, completes and clarifies urban structure	privately or publicly offered and refinanced	side effect, problematic consequence of modernization
scopes of responsibility	cultural activities, civil society	social services	urban green space planning, sponsors	investors	city planning
spatial scopes	stable neighbourhoods, town forests	socially problematic areas	quarters, boulevards	entrance restricted and commercial facilities	brownfields, setbacks
maintenance	extensive, inconspicuous	ostentatious, integrative	intensive, pure	economical	focused, provisional
financing	cultural budget, open space maintenance budgets	support programmes of town planning and social welfare, town planning contracts	open space maintenance budgets, sponsoring, rehabilitation measures of landscape scenery	private, poss. promotion of the economy	budget of state-owned properties, rehabilitation measures of ecological balance

Table 4 Scheme of the structural concept

Latent Green (Fig. 8) is the problematic consequence of modernization within cities. Its qualities are involuntariness and indecision. In this space, selective shrinkage, a polarization of spatial use and infrastructure, and the loss of control of urban development is met flexibly and with limited risk. Conceptual roles of Latent Green are provision of development-friendly property using ‘perspective restructuring’ (e.g., opening up brownfields with alleys) and suburban residential development in the inner city as ‘city-country hybrids’ (e.g., by developing allotment gardens into small residential estates).

These five planning categories characterize the functions and qualities of the entire structure of urban green open space in Berlin and – modified by an analysis of different models – could be applied in any other city. They can be the basis for new projects of local open space policy and form the framework of the maintenance budgets (see Table 4). They can delineate the functional and budgetary responsibilities of public authorities as social services department, department of culture and parks commission.

Such a model-orientated and transparent structural concept thus gives urban green open space planning a new autonomous level of legitimization that is independent of the interests of nature and environmental conservation but related to the city structure. As a result, it renews an implicit city/open space structure.

### Conclusion

Qualitative open space planning enables the questioning of existing categories and concepts. It justifies new planning structures based on a maximum variation of perspectives of their existing as well as their potential states – and recognizes the paradoxical special features of open space while looking beyond linear functional roles. This method makes useful distinctions between self-elected and situative imbalance in an urban society of fine differences and polarization and opens up a discussion concerning an ethic of pluralist

concepts of nature. Qualitative open space planning leads to an understanding of pluralism and synchronicity in urban society and urban nature. By using logical arguments, it allows the formulation of an independent theory to legitimate open space in an implicit urban understanding.

Such open space planning is the practice of experimental theory. Heinz Bude (2000) describes this, with a view of Charles Sanders Peirce’s abductive conclusion, not only as a cognitive act, but as a moment of designing a world. By overcoming common ways of static thinking and limited methods of perception, qualitative methods offer an alternative to the routines of paradigmatic complexity reduction and make an art out of interpretation. The art of science is to take advantage of coincidence and to be able to cope with uncertainty. This art lies in the acceptance of the design character of understanding. It also lies in the person of the researcher, from whom no one can remove the responsibility for an interpretation. At last the art of that science lies in the way of presentation. The fact that science still differs from art lies not in its interest in the singularity of the case, but in understanding the specificity of constructing a category (Bude 2000).

In this way, qualitative science touches the thinking of landscape architecture, not only in terms of the creative subject with its specific understanding of social and cultural relationships, but in its methodological foundations as well. Its theory begins where it turns from the unique to the specific, without leaving the design process behind.



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## Biographical Notes

Sören Schöbel was born in 1967. After studying landscape architecture at the Technical University in Berlin he worked freelance since 1995 and as a scientific assistant at the TU Berlin from 1998 to 2003, when he did his doctorate. Since 2005, he holds the chair of Landscape Architecture and Regional Open Space at the Munich University of Technology. His research focuses on the possibilities of and design methods for urban landscape architecture on a regional scale.

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The unabridged qualitative structural analysis can be found in the author's dissertation at: [http://edocs.tu-berlin.de/diss/2003/schoebelrutschmann\\_soeren.htm](http://edocs.tu-berlin.de/diss/2003/schoebelrutschmann_soeren.htm)