Open territories

The mentioned global trends of the past decades, pre-
senting the challenges for the future, are studied and well known. Rather than shoehorning blatant utopias, it is more necessary than ever to develop concrete design approaches for the transformation of the urbanized landscape into regenerative territories, maintaining a high quality of life. Closing resource and energy cycles is the order of the day. But certain self-sufficient eco-cities, local energy networks or closed loop recycling management systems run the risk of excluding the non-involved or non-
paying others. Responsible design for future open territories should there-
tofore exemplify their potential to accommodate socially democratic collec-
tivities based on individual freedom, the division of labour, specialization and plurality.

A ubiquitous understanding of today’s territory
Everything shaped by humans is culture, this includes the territory. Cultured landscapes emerge through medium dense form of interaction with nature. Their regional differences are due to natural conditions and increase with growing tech-
nological development. With this holistic concept of the ‘Kulturlandschaft’ we endeavour to consider better the whole as non-built areas as ONE continuous culturally shaped landscape.

The challenge in the future is to design and develop sus-
tainable concepts based on the implementation of rene-
Wale. The so-called ‘Mittelland’, that comprises a vast hilly zone between the Lake Geneva and the Alps, is an essential example. The building stock in Europe is accountable for a major share of the energy consumption with construction being the most resource consuming human activity. Its orientation versus regenerative principles is therefore not just a marketing strategy but rather a social necessity in the long run. Additionally, spatial and strategic design is a powerful tool to test and negotiate future developments with the various players involved.

The Swiss condition
Due to its topography, a wide area of Switzerland is not habitable. And while the population is still growing (although all fore-
casts for the developed world point to a stagnation in middle terms), high pressures are expected on existing rural and urban areas.

The superposition of man-

Medium dense urbanisation (Rhine valley close to the lake Constance)

factors renders the open landscape more and more urban as well. Partic-

ularly transforming lifestyles result in more intensive

The urbanization of the landscape
Considering their ecological footprint, developed nations of the West claim a bigger part of the planet’s surface per capita than they are entitled to. Consequently, land use needs to be thought through more as a business and not just be a function of the market. The Swiss location in the Alpine region is the reason for the development of the ‘Mittelland’, that comprises a vast hilly zone between the Lake Geneva and the Alps, is an essential example. The building stock in Europe is accountable for a major share of the energy consumption with construction being the most resource consuming human activity. Its orientation versus regenerative principles is therefore not just a marketing strategy but rather a social necessity in the long run. Additionally, spatial and strategic design is a powerful tool to test and negotiate future developments with the various players involved.

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Factors renders the open landscape more and more urban as well. Partic-

ularly transforming lifestyles result in more intensive use of landscape. Leisure activities in Switzerland, for instance, are responsible for more than 40% of overall traffic. Today, farmers com-
plain about littering along walking trails and traffic con-
flicts with horseback riders or mountain bikers. In the traditionally compact and dense city cores sophisticated building laws and licence agreements have been developed and negotiated over the centuries to allow the coexistence of a broad variety of activities. This legal groundwork is one of the basic foundations of the cities’ urbanity. Such negotiation processes will have to be conducted for the entire territory, including the uninhabited areas, in the future.

Implementing robust long-term strategies
To steer and orchestrate upcoming tasks such as infrastructure renewal, settlement densification and self-sufficient energy and resource supply, long-term strategies are needed. Taking the urban system of Switzerland the municipalities enjoy large autonomy with respect to spatial planning. Taking this high potential in quality develop-
m, the municipalities are overwhelmed with this mission. Notably, it is difficult to arrange political acceptance for long-term planning strategies.

Involving players
Involving important local stakeholders and interest groups into the design pro-
cess already at an early stage is crucial for the future acceptance and, thus, success of projects. Local knowledge can be of great help in analyzing the deficits and necessities have to be found to develop these urban landscapes.

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