

**Jan Albert Šturma**

**An encounter of a locust tree and a toothbrush on  
a dissecting table: metropolitan vegetation  
surrealism**

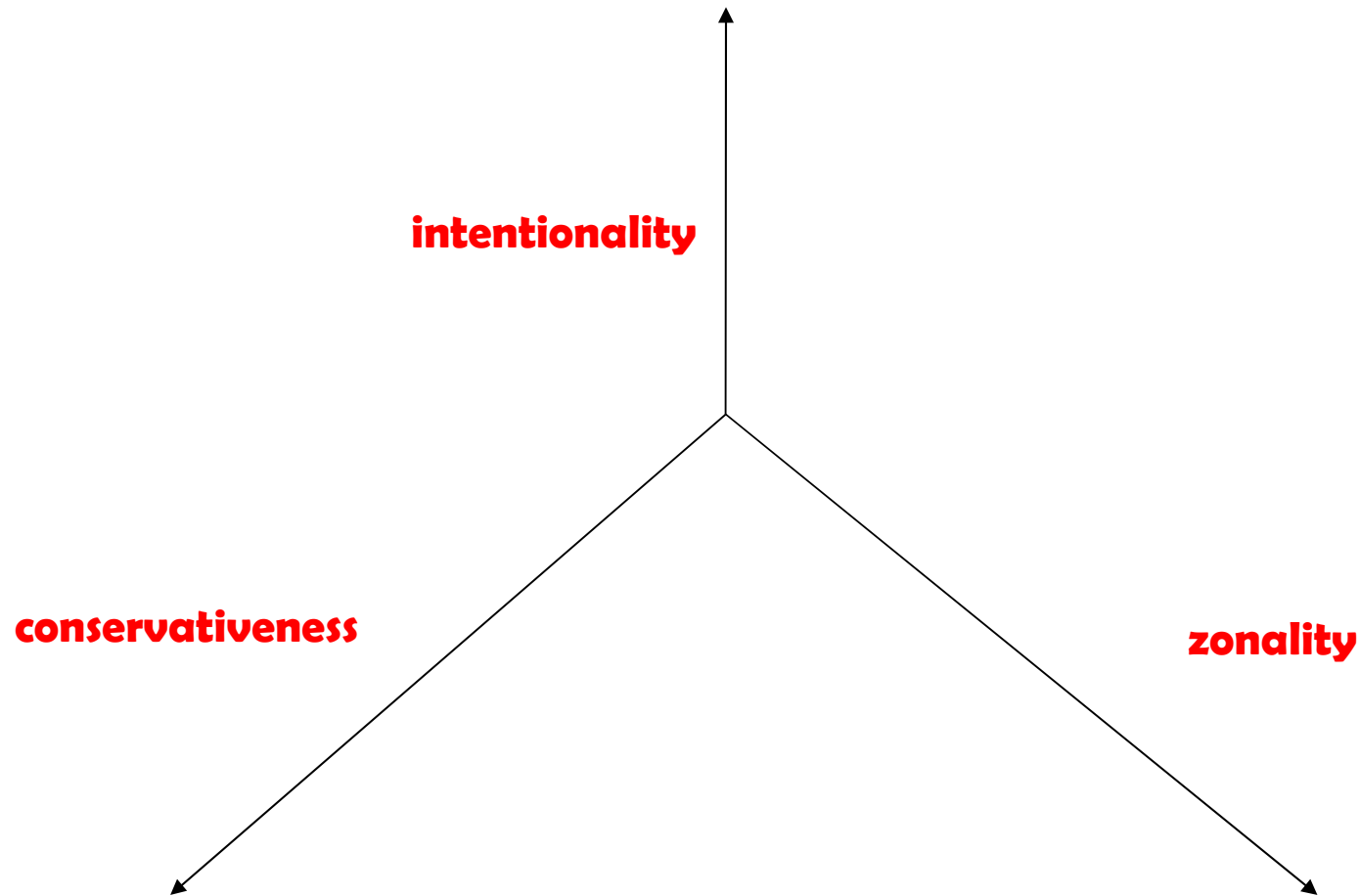


# **structure of this presentation**

- **nature of a city landscape: using both vegetation science and sociology/urbanism**
- **using the knowledge: living in the city open space**
- **current projects and the nature conservation**



# three dimensions of the city vegetation



# ***conservativeness***

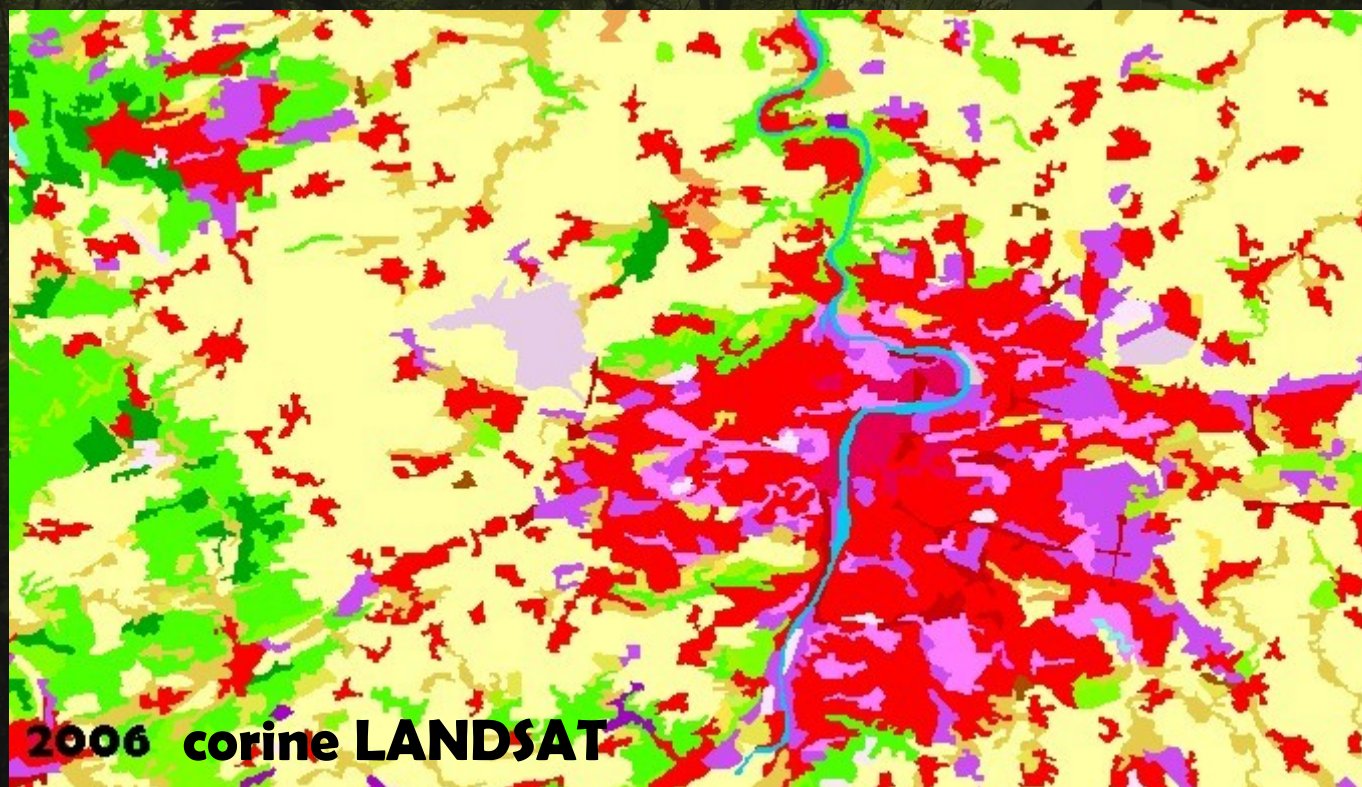
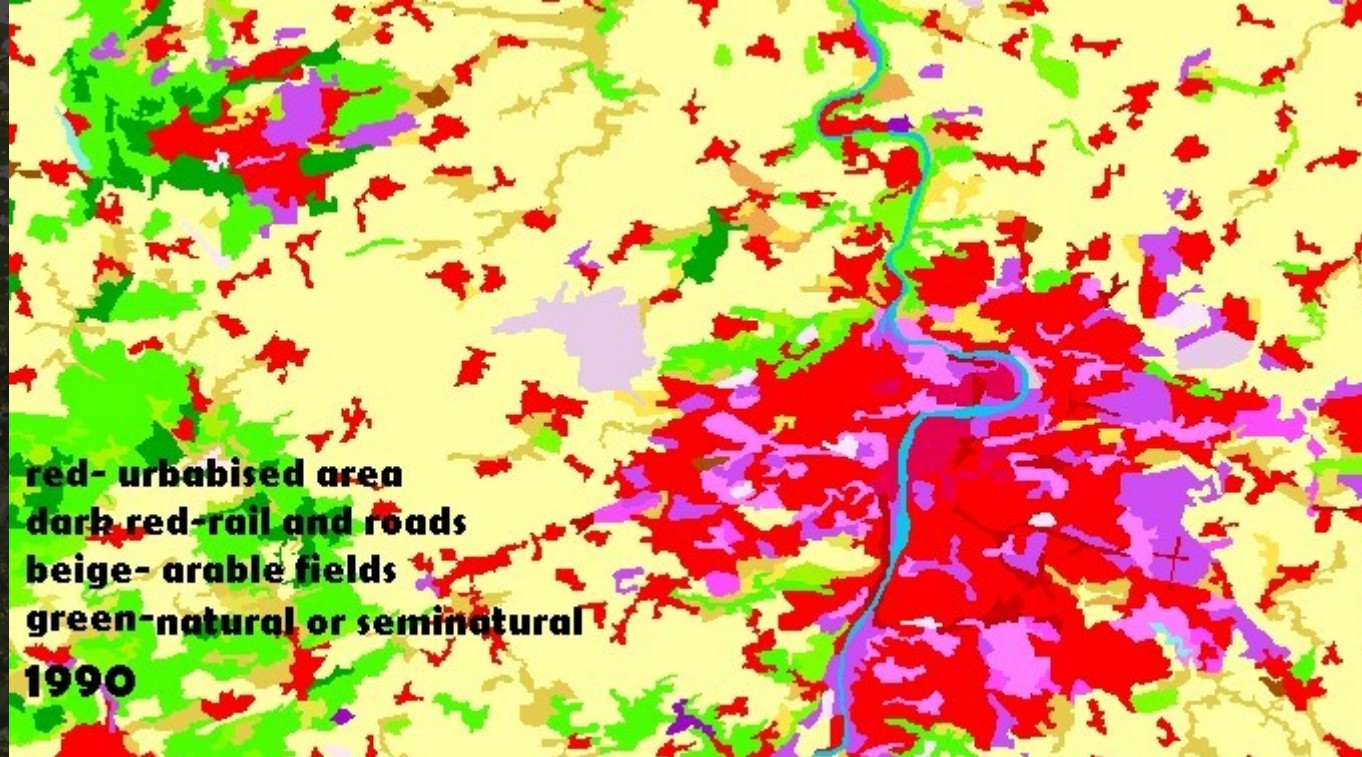
## **general pattern: species/habitat composition**

- city comprises a very large scale of a very different biotops**
- most of them are commonly classified as transient ones between the „natural“ and „ruderal“, and remain unknown or unrecognized**
- these biotops contain enormous number of plant species, many of them of very cosmopolitan origin**
- some of these biotop have very exotic look**



# **general pattern: mosaic evolution**

- city landscape can be described as an evolving mosaic filled with „grains“ lying on a gradient between conservative and highly dynamical structures**



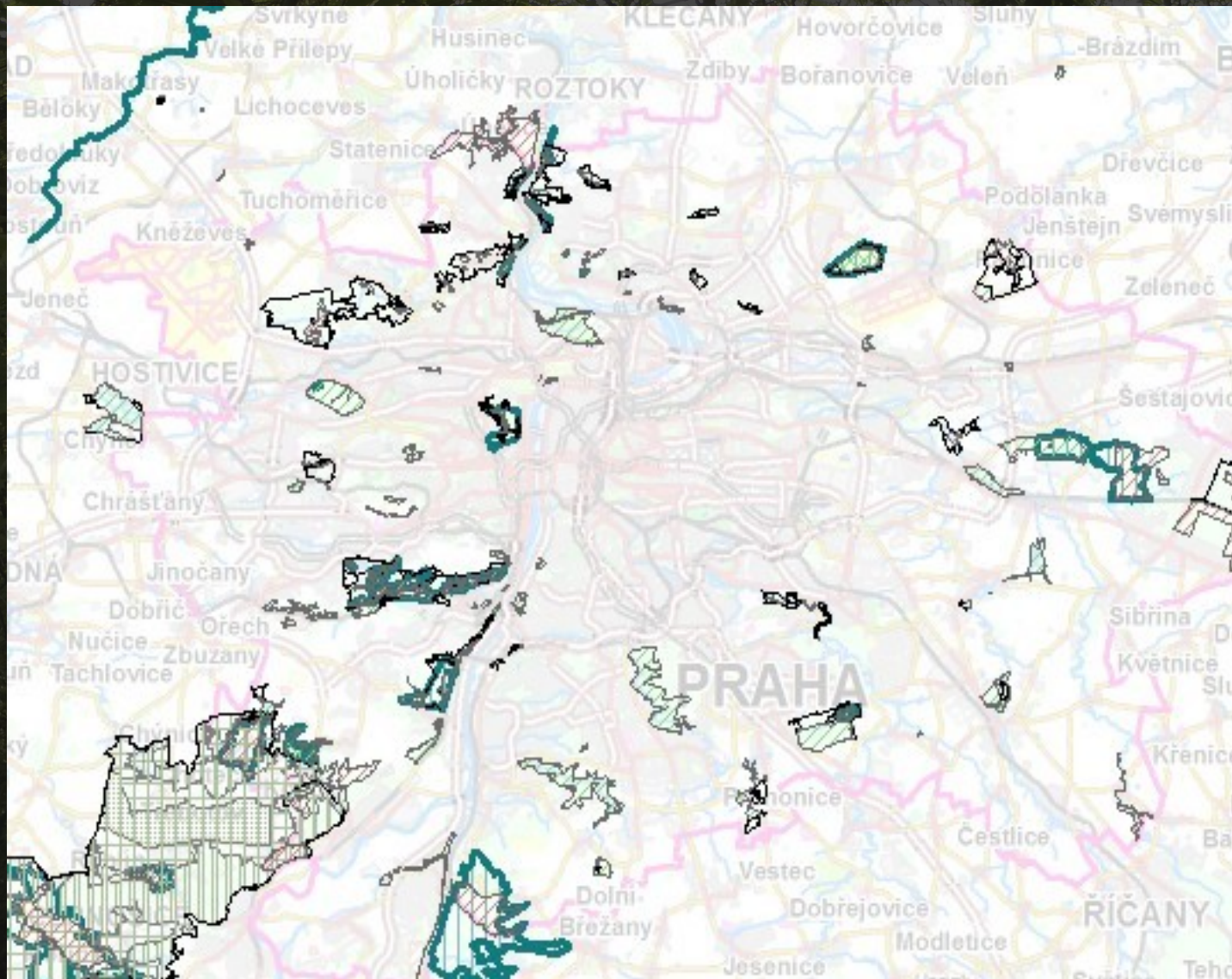
# **general pattern: conservative structures**

- conservative structures are usually generally unchanged reamins of the open countryside, old parcs and also „cores“ of the old settelments, like villages consumed by the urban sprawl, as well as the old city center**
- they have some kind of long-term memory**
- their highest density is in the city center**





# nature conservation sites



# **general pattern: dynamical structures**

- **most of brownfields, heaps, ....**
- **high cover of bare soil**
- **typical for the suburbs**
- **very rich in cosmopolitan plant species**
- **no or very short memory, which is soon deleted (by removal, succession or „cultivation“)**









# ***zonality***

- **the vegetation of the city centre, suburbs and the countryside is sharply different**

# ***zonality***

- **most interesting is the zone between the conservative center and rural countryside**
- **this area is called „periphery“, „city edge“ or „suburb“**
- **has a very distinguishable vegetation, sociology and „chaotic“ urbanisation**
- **plants or humans can do „anything“ there**
- **it displays some of the dreaming and/or subconscious features**

**experimental authentication of the „true“ suburb**



## ***intentionality (spontaneity)***

- **most of the urban vegetation is directly created or formed by humans**
- **there is no 100% conscious intention or plan (even artificial lawns or parks are immediately expanded by „by chance“ plant species)**
- **the human (un)intention and/or psychology, mind structure or archeotypes are one of the main natural driving forces, the same as sunlight or nutrient level ,eg.**
- **street art, billboards or advertisement formally features the same natural principles as urban vegetation**



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Matika Paramundova  
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H... ART... 30=2

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# **living in the city landscape: using the vegetation knowledge**



A photograph of a makeshift shelter constructed from blue and green tarps in a wooded area. The shelter is situated on a dirt clearing, surrounded by trees and dense foliage. A person is visible inside the shelter. The ground is covered with various items, including plastic bags and debris. A semi-transparent text box is overlaid on the top half of the image, containing the text "where to sleep and eat?".

# where to sleep and eat?

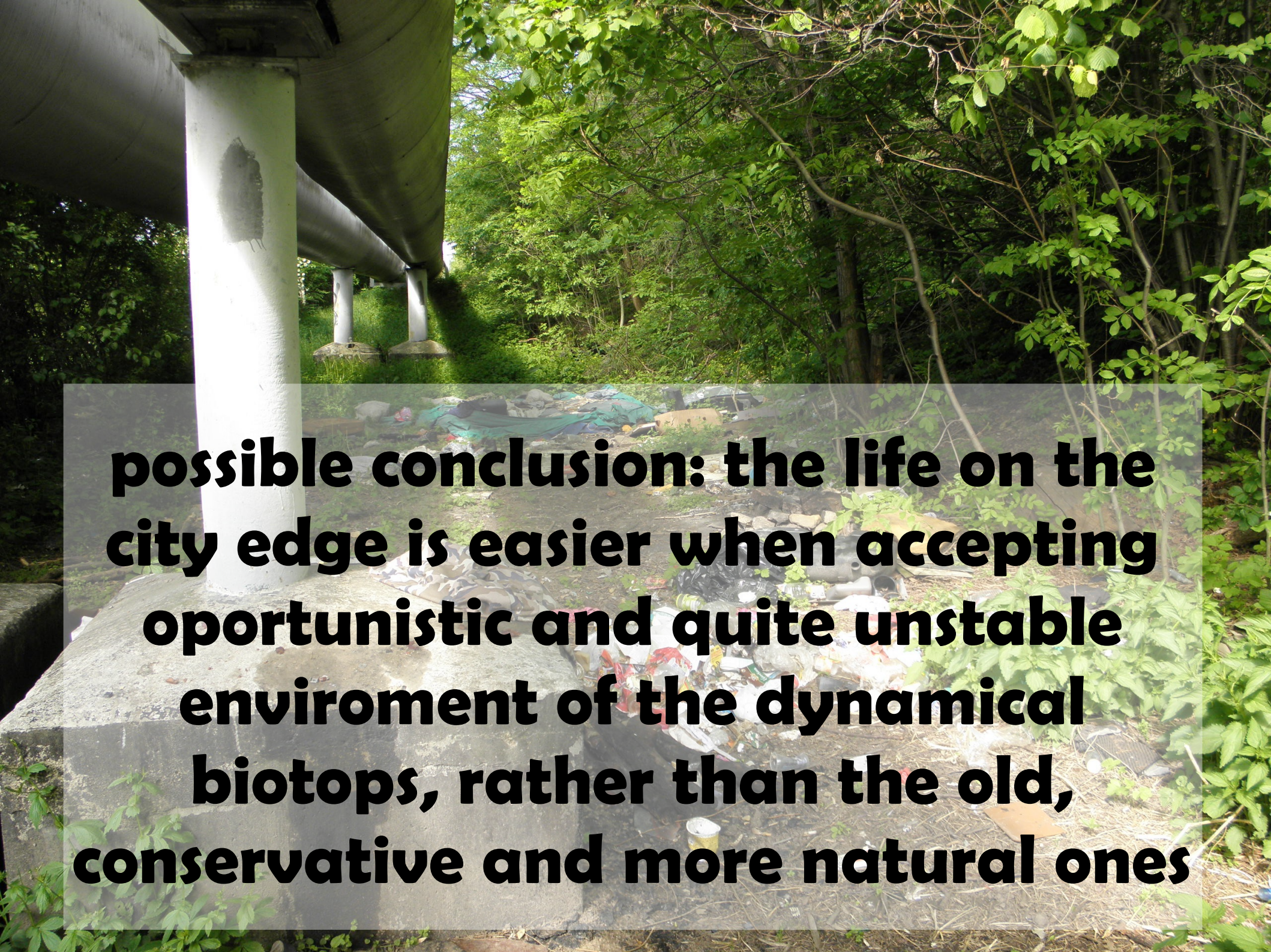
- **the suburb posses the most diverse enviroment**
- **the most „exotic“ types of vegetation are the best ones, because the majority avoids them**
- **the periphery is rich in seasonal food resources- old abandoned orchards, fruit shrubs- prunes and cherries**

# biotop preferences

- the highest inhabitation density is in the multi-layer *Robinia pseudoacacia*/*Clematis vitalba* forests
- this vegetation consist of almost only *invasive* (= aggressive foreign) plant species

A photograph of a dense forest with a rocky path leading through it. The trees are mostly green, and there are some large rocks visible on the right side. The text is overlaid on the bottom half of the image.

**the natural biotops are mostly  
empty...., even they are quite  
suitable**

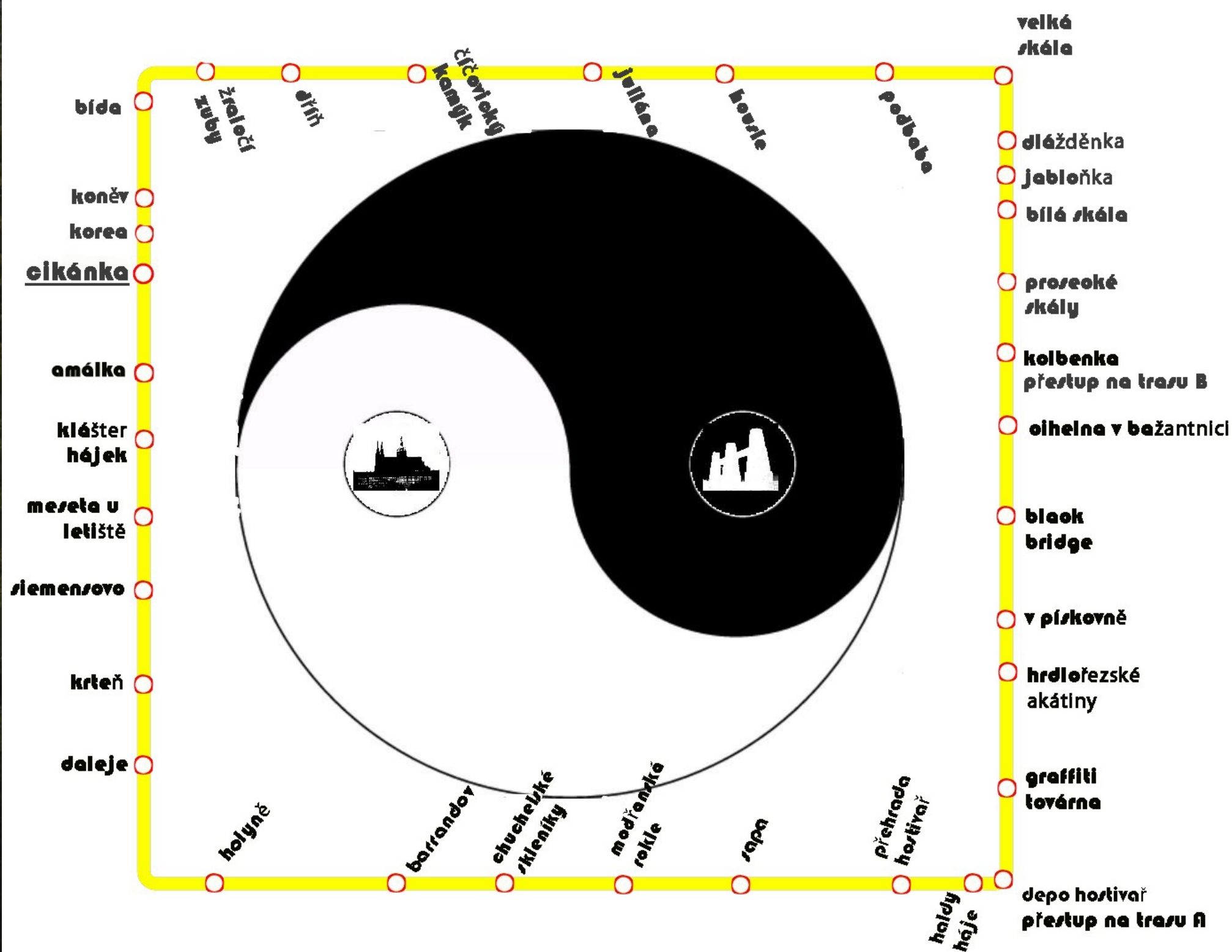


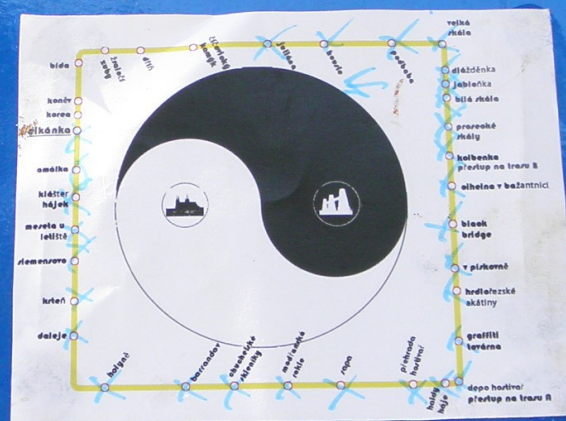
**possible conclusion: the life on the city edge is easier when accepting oportunisttic and quite unstable enviroment of the dynamical biotops, rather than the old, conservative and more natural ones**

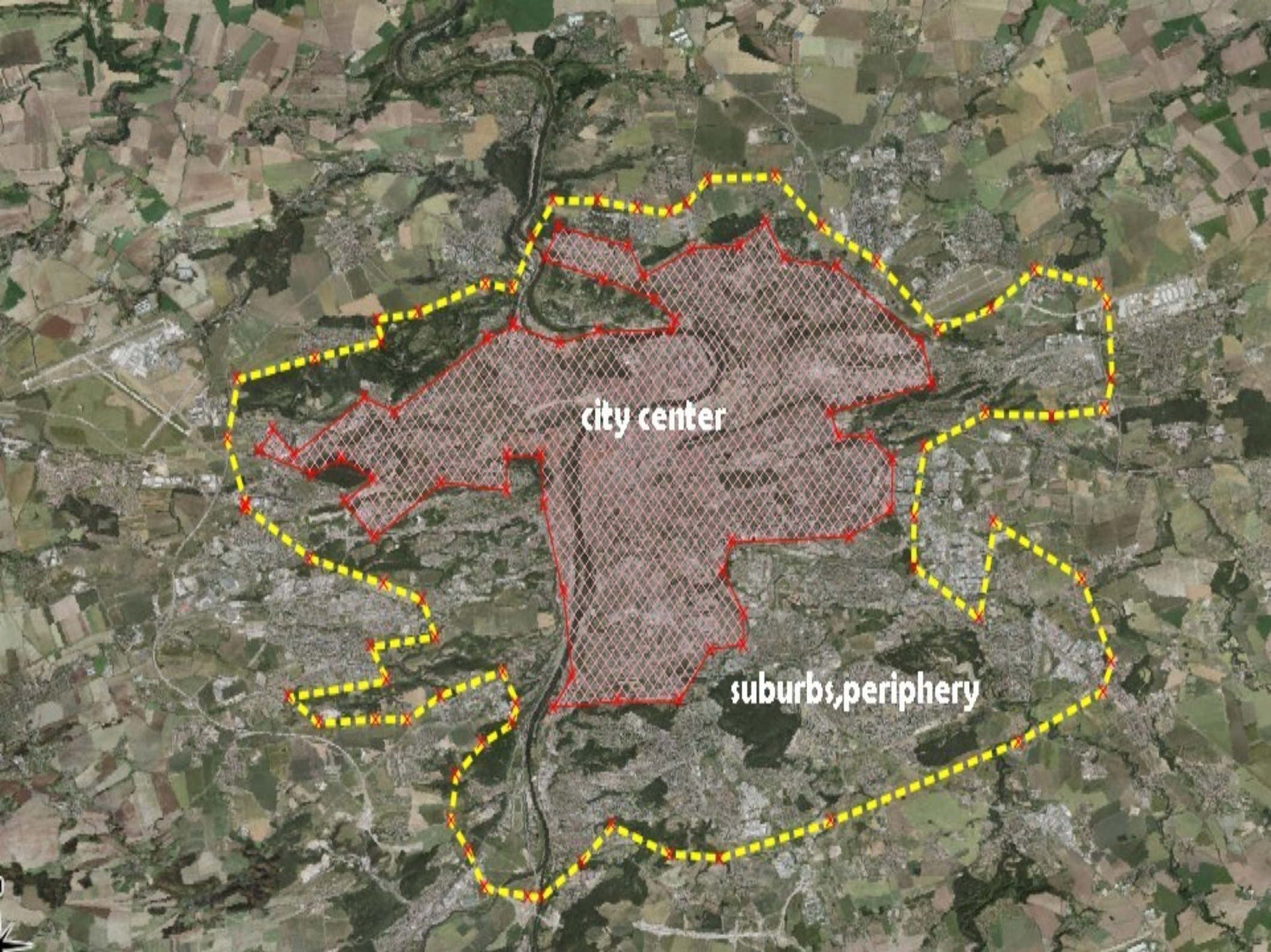
# **current projects**

## **searching the city periphery**

- **long-distance walk around the city**
- **overnight at unstable, strange places**
- **experimental estimation of the centre/edge borders**







city center

suburbs, periphery

# **inhabiting shrubs**

- **lecture path brought the shrubs at an old coal mine**
- **the suburbs are an excellent space for performances or concerts, or religious rituals**

**and what about the nature  
conservation?**



# ...new national park?







**...great new nature conservation**

**dumping waste anywhere**

**building shopping centres**

**introducing new invasive species**

**burning plastics and chemicals**

**abandoning fields and orchards**

**supporting „homeless“ lifestyle**

**are we mature enough to do so?**

