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SEARCHING OF COMMUNITY IN URBAN TERRITORY. IN THE EXAMPLE OF GROWING CROPS IN COMMUNITY GARDENS

Abstract:

This report is focused on problems of community creation in urban territory. There is very often process on individualisation and social isolation in the city territory. Community gardens bring people together in pursuance of different motivations and in order to reach their personal needs. From this point of view we can see community gardens as a factor that supports creation and strenght of the communities and interpersonal relationships amont citizens. Through alternative way of obtaining food in the urban environment to attempt to identify opportunities for sustainable food self-sufficiency. These gardens are trying to foster healthy crops in an urban environment, in particular the principles of permaculture. The aim of this paper is to describe the phenomenon of community gardens in Slovakia through cultivation within the collective efforts of the resulting communities and how to organize gardens.

Keywords:

Community gardens, community, urban environment, individualisation, growing crops

JEL Classification: Q19

Introduction

There is very often process on individualisation and social isolation in the urban territory. Anonymity of city helps to create these facts and different citizen initiatives for their reversion are created. One of those initiatives are community gardens that offers their members active spending of the spare time, meeting of the needs and mainly, the feeling to be a part of community and support of interpersonal relationships.

Community gardens bring together people, support contacts and interactions among them, represent ways of social integrity, active spending of spare time as well as meeting the needs of members. The report is focused on social and cultural aspects of membership in those groups, of activities and events organised in environment of community gardens.

The main object is to show how process of individualisation and social integration can be reverse due to incorporation of citizens to the activities on community gardens.

In urban areas, people usually do not have the opportunity to grow their own crops, related primarily to the prevailing type of housing in residential units. Therefore, often times they are looking for different alternative means of getting to fresh and healthy food. Even in the more such opportunities.

Preference for local products and produce are grown often based on the supersaturation foreign restaurants, fast food establishments, low-quality foreign goods of mass production and the like. More and more information is found on the harmful effects of fast food meals, chemicals in food, and its lack of products sold in supermarkets. To a large extent, also promoted a healthy lifestyle and organic products. These elements affect the change in the mentality of people and access to nutrition and production of products and the urban environment.

Due to fresh local products visit different farmers' markets, farm shops and organic. The number of such markets and shops is increasing, which also confirms the preference for domestic products to the food imported from abroad and from large scale.

Recently, also it is becoming popular crate system of food distribution . Crate model is a popular way of distributing fresh, local and seasonal organic products directly to households and is used by more and more consumers. It works by Farmer grown their crops and "debničkáři"(debnička = crate, box) it regularly convey directly to the customer. The advantage of buying food from local suppliers is the fact that the consumer knows exactly who vegetables and fruit was grown, where and how. Purchase will support the farmers whose produce we consume, thereby encouraging the small farmers whose work affects the surrounding nature and landscape.

Even in urban areas but often people prefer growing their own crops. One possibility self-produced a limited number of crops is on balconies and terraces. Such a method

of gardening is devoted to the various organizations that organize meetings and film workshops to raise public awareness in this regard cultivation. Courses on urban cultivation may be interested to learn what plants can be limited in such conditions grow as sown seeds, how to choose a suitable container for this kind of production, the plants, place, grow and take care of them.

In recent years, however, it is becoming increasingly popular phenomenon of community gardens. Such garden was created in cities across the country, develop, progressing and inspire other individuals and groups to create new gardens.

Enthusiasts, townspeople and neighborhood from the neighborhood expressed their support for the finding alternative means of exploitation, by developing their transformation into public edible garden. On neglected, unused areas are beginning to meet friends, neighbours and complete strangers people together and formed communities.

This paper considers the right to examples of how community gardens alternative ways of obtaining food in the urban environment. Its aim is to outline the prospects for sustainable food sovereignty in cases where people have the opportunity to grow crops on their own land. The paper describes the phenomenon of community gardens in Slovakia through cultivation within the collective efforts of the community and the resulting organizational methods Gardens.

Theoretical and methodological basis

City is a community with many differences against village, mainly in diversity of habitants and their lifestyle. It's a complicated organism that is different in quantity – the extent and number of agglomeration as well as in quality – wide social composition, complexity of relationships and bonds. There is definitions of city in the sociological and social – anthropological spheres but the one from Louis Wirth is quote the most often. He defines city as *a relatively large, densely populated and permanent residence of social heterogenous individuals* (Wirth, 1964: 77). Based on three factors – size, density and degree of heterogeneity explains characteristics of city lifestyle and pointing out differences among cities of different sizes and types (Wirth, 1964: 77). Older sociological definition of city mentioned dichotomy of rural and urban territories and describe city as a space of negative and decrease values (Redfield, 1941). As a urbanization is growing, sociological definition of urban society connects with higher degree of modernization, non – commitment on ground and natural condition, higher migration among residences, choosing of different jobs, releasing under from social control of rural society, higher degree of urban democracy, desintegration of patriarchal family and emancipation of women is changing, too.

For today's man, specific pattern of behaviour mainly in urban environment is continuing and deepening individualisation of individualities and social groups. By

someones, individualization is cultural reaction on the origin of unified society of mass consumption. Possible reaction is deepening plurazition: highlighting specifics and individualities of lifestyles by different individuals and groups. Despite of efforts to unified economic patterns and models there is a more intensive common penetration of different and various socio – cultural patterns and cultural traditions. Social, economical, political and religious constellations in developed countries speak about significant changes in the spere of cultural patterns. People's environment becomes more global as well as more local connect.

Community gardens can be as chance how to change this process in urban territory. It's important that the initiative of community gardens have oigin in interesting and engagement of local habitants. The result is democratical coexistence and acsts as a part of public sphere (Corrigan, 2011), Bauman (2001) say that civil society isis threatened in implication of indivialisations processes. In the personalized society there os something like ragmentation of responsibility and space of personal selfishness is ipened. Social life in urban environment is losing intimacy and space for vandalism and criminality is created (Anguelovski, 2013: 179). As Keller (1999) is saying in modern society there is progressive acceptance of function of tradiotional communities by society – wide instance non – community types. The individuals are still less engaged in voluntary activities, the numbers of contats is degreasing and social solidarity is fading. The way how to avert the influence of individualism describes Durkeim (in Delanty, 2003) in the way of active citizenship that is understood as a solidarity development. At the same. it permits consolidation of new social values and a filling of individuals needs

Community gardens are created mainly in urban environment were citizens cannot access to land and plant growing. Through this local iniative they can grow different types of plant, share experiences, knew the neighbours and be a part of different educational and cultural activities and events. Goal of community gardens is to grow plants commontly and to reclaim nonusing spaces in city.

Gardens can be closed or open for public and are created on public, governmental or private space, mainly on nonusing grounds that are reclaim by members of gardens. Key point is to gain edible crops, what is main different between community garden and public park. These gardes are primary for growing the fruits and vegetables. Community gardens have a special structure. Garden can be created by local authority, civic associations or by group of enthusiasts (Budder, 1990: 43).

Crops growing on community gardens is very popular in the whole world. First community gardens were created yet in the 16th century in Great Britain where the queen Elisabeth I. built gardens for residents of tenement houses (Bartolomei et al, 2003: 21). At the end of the 19th century community gardens were created also in United States, the first one were create in Detroit. These gardens were based on help to unemployed people during economic crisis and war. Unemployed workers could grow a crops on assigned field. In the same time, educational gardens near to schools and playground started to be created. These facts we can consider as

a startline to focusing on appearance and changes of public territory (Lawson, 2005).

In the researching area, community gardens started to be create in 2012. In the comparison with western Europe countries or North America, in Slovakia the phenomena wasn't fixed on historical events so the start was based later. Community gardens were created due to inspiration of gardens from Western Europe.

Motivation that leads to establishment of community garden can be various. By Guitart (2012) the main motivation is desire to reach some goal. The most often reasons by him are:

- consumption of fresh and non-chemical modified grocery
- building of community and social interaction
- support of health of members
- sparing the Money for grocery by the growing
- environmental learning and enlightenmment

This report is focused mainly on motivation relatives with communal life, therefore building the community and social interaction among the members.

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Organization of community gardens

Community gardens are organized in different ways. These methods depend on several factors. The primary factor in how the garden is the work of its founder.

Community gardens can be broken down by the **founder**:

- Garden set up a private person
- Garden established by the Municipality
- Garden established organization or a civic association

Within the sample of community gardens are encountered especially from the garden, set up a non-profit organization or public association as their primary or secondary activity. Gardens established by the Municipality are not included in the sample, but the operation of community gardens is often closely related as acts on land leased from the city district and therefore the establishment of a permit. At the site in the city of Bratislava, however, it is well established gardens districts, and thus government.

An important element within the research community gardens is the question of ownership of the land on which the garden is located. Gardens can be closed or open to the public and to create a public, state or private land, but this is mainly unused land on which the members of their work to cultivate gardens.

From the perspective of the owner of the garden and its subsequent use of community gardens can be divided into three types:

- Local government as the owner of the property entrusted to him or rented community use
- Land use has been entrusted to private owner community
- Garden, where land is privately owned by some members, but the community

If the deal by placing community gardens in the area, it is important to point out the different types of premises where the garden may be. One of the main features of community gardens is to seek to the improvement of unused space. Thus, the garden will be located on different abandoned, derelict or unused land. Gardens can be located on the premises of various public institutions such as schools, kindergartens, hospitals, cultural facilities and the like. The other type of garden is a possibility of their operation within the premises of private companies and organizations. Individual types may be overlap and cutting may not be exactly to specified. All studied community gardens are located on leased land and there was this model of private property.

Since this is a considerably young phenomenon in our country, in all cases examined, it is a leased land, there is not even possible to talk about the issue of **property rights and the manner of inheritance** of such land, often times the current issue of the international community gardens.

Methods of funding community gardens are different. The most common model is the collection of annual membership fees for a culture box, bag or Hriadkach which members or family farmed. In this way we encounter in all tested gardens except Gardens in Life, they are caring members of this project and enthusiasts. Money raised membership fees collected will be used to further the costs associated with the

operation of gardens, such as payments for rent, water consumption, purchase necessary equipment, various repairs or construction of new growing fields. Funds are also obtained as gifts from organizations, paying 2% tax, applying for projects and allocating grants from the participatory budget of the local area in which the garden is located.

The establishment of community gardens is closely linked to the person whom we can call central.

The **central person** is the founder and coordinator of community gardens. He organizes joint brigade impetus to planning meetings, presenting the garden to the public, he represents and communicates as his representative to various institutions and sponsors.

The actual operation and functioning of the community gardens are planned and negotiated ad all members of the garden. Before you can create community gardens and transformation of premises in which the garden is located, decided by future members of its form. Decisions are made about how the garden look like, what will grow, which will spread the cultivation boxes, boxes or bags, which will be located garden as a warehouse, greenhouse, compost, water, gazebo and other what crops They will grow and the like.

Such decision shall be made by **community planning**. The garden was created with all the community planning process, it means that you meet future members who garden plan together and must agree on how it will look and what there who will make.

Community planning is a process that seeks to map local needs for social services and compare them with local resources. Generally it is planning method for direct public participation when a community considered those who were given the contact area, respectively. those who are in the field service use. (Matousek, 2007: 28). Community planning is seen in a very close relationship with community social work, as well as with community development. According Kasanová (2007) is community work and community planning model focused on community-based care while trying to cultivate social networks and volunteer services. The main objective is to satisfy the needs of the population.

Even after the initial planning meetings and through the creation of community gardens, members meet these gardens and to plan future work in the garden. Typical are meeting once a week or according to the needs of the implementation of the joint work. Such meetings are often associated with various common activities, picnics, barbeques and the like.

The aim of such joint planning is to strengthen social cohesion and all members can consider it as a process of identification of needs, resources and search for the best solutions.

Forms of crops in community gardens

Options crops in community gardens are closely linked to its **location in space**. In this respect it is possible to divide the garden into four types:

- Stable gardens in which crops are planted directly in the soil
- Stable gardens, which are grown in raised beds, growing bags or boxes
- Mobile gardens that if necessary the use of the land on which they happen to be transferred to another - growing in the growing portable boxes or bags
- Garden built in an area with no contact with the soil (on terraces, rooftops, squares, etc.) - growing in the cultivation boxes or bags

Ways of **organizing work** in the gardens is determined in particular by means of that community planning. In all cases, the survey sample was faced with breaking down the garden space into individual parts that are managed by a designated person or group of people. These sections are growing boxes, boxes, raised beds or boxes. In the area of community gardens also hold joint brigade, attended by all members. Brigades are organized especially for work on the common areas, such as mowing, creating garden that serves all members (such as joint sitting, summer house, compost, watering the like.). Within the community gardens also it works as member assistance if the owner cannot come into the garden and take care of your flower bed, after agreement, the crop field is another member or the like.

The **growing of crops** in community gardens may or may not governed by different principles and approaches. It is important to realize that the cultivation in these gardens is different from traditional intensive farming in rural areas.

A strong impulse that led to the inclusion in activities such gardens, is an effort to grow the healthy and non-chemically treated food crops as opposed purchased in retail chains. Therefore the basic features of community gardens in this regard is to avoid the use of chemical means of cultivation practices (eg different spraying against pests and diseases, fertilizers, etc.).

The gardens shall apply various forms of management. In general, an environmental approach to growing a crops and cultivation according to permaculture principles or using some of their components.

Preferring ecological management approach uses elements and principles of organic farming. The philosophy of organic farming is based on a holistic understanding of nature, where man is not a ruler, but a natural part. Eco production is based on local and renewable sources. Underlying this is a multifunctional agriculture crop rotation, which collects and substituting crops in order to preserve soil fertility, nitrogen ratio and robustness of crops, thus ensuring the quality and sustainability of production. (Kovac et al., 2008)

Collect food in the urban environment, natural gardens, community life, therefore,

most community gardens are managed in establishing the idea of permaculture and sustainable development. The original meaning of the term permaculture was permanent agriculture, t. j. agriculture able to operate sustainably at the site indefinitely. Gradually incorporate all the social aspects of sustainable development and its importance has been extended to a permanent culture(Mollison,1991). Permaculture is a designer approach to solving problems associated with the procurement of food in accordance with the kind of respect for nature. Permaculture design principles are based on the functioning of natural ecosystems and are inspired by the natural patterns. The fundamental patterns include the development and life cycle (succession and recycling), to the different spatial patterns as they occur naturally, such as spirals, fractals, tree structure and so on. The role of permaculture design is to save natural resources and work through observation of natural laws and create the most effective system of producing food with a minimum deposit.

Conclusion

Community gardens provide an interesting example of alternative management in the urban environment. People in towns often do not have the opportunity to grow their own crops and do not want to buy food imported from abroad opt for this way of obtaining healthy products.

An important aspect to consider when research community gardens take into account is that in addition to an alternative way of farming and food supply is also an important component of establishing links between their members. Community gardens are established mainly by people from the Territorial near the garden and used to create new relationships and to consolidate existing ones. It might be argued that in the study area, and therefore, in particular in the area where it becomes life and neighbourly relations increasingly anonymous, dropped to a large extent, by a sense of belonging and mutual relations. And just community gardens, whose number is increasing, contributing to the creation of communities in the urban environment. For members of such gardens is largely the motivation to escape the stereotypical life, sedentary work and the anonymity of the city.

Community gardens are also characterized by a form of organization. In this respect, it is particularly important to those who gardens established. In each of the gardens surveyed occurs principal person, founder, coordinator and the like, which presents to the public garden and to some extent governed by their activities. The actual realization of gardens is not organized by its members through community planning.

Community gardens now represent an important factor supporting interpersonal relationships and creating community in an urban environment. Your local targeting act as a counterpart to individualisation, which is in often very noticeable.

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