

video

Urban Green - a study on community garden projects in Berlin and Rotterdam
by Sonja Poehlmann & Christina Liesegang, 2009, 17 min

The research film „Urban Green” is part of an academic research project on community engagement and place-making processes in public urban spaces. The film portrays the meanings of community garden projects perceived by the involved participants and organizers. It shows why they engage in the creation of green community spaces through appropriating urban spaces and grassroots activity.

URBAN GREEN

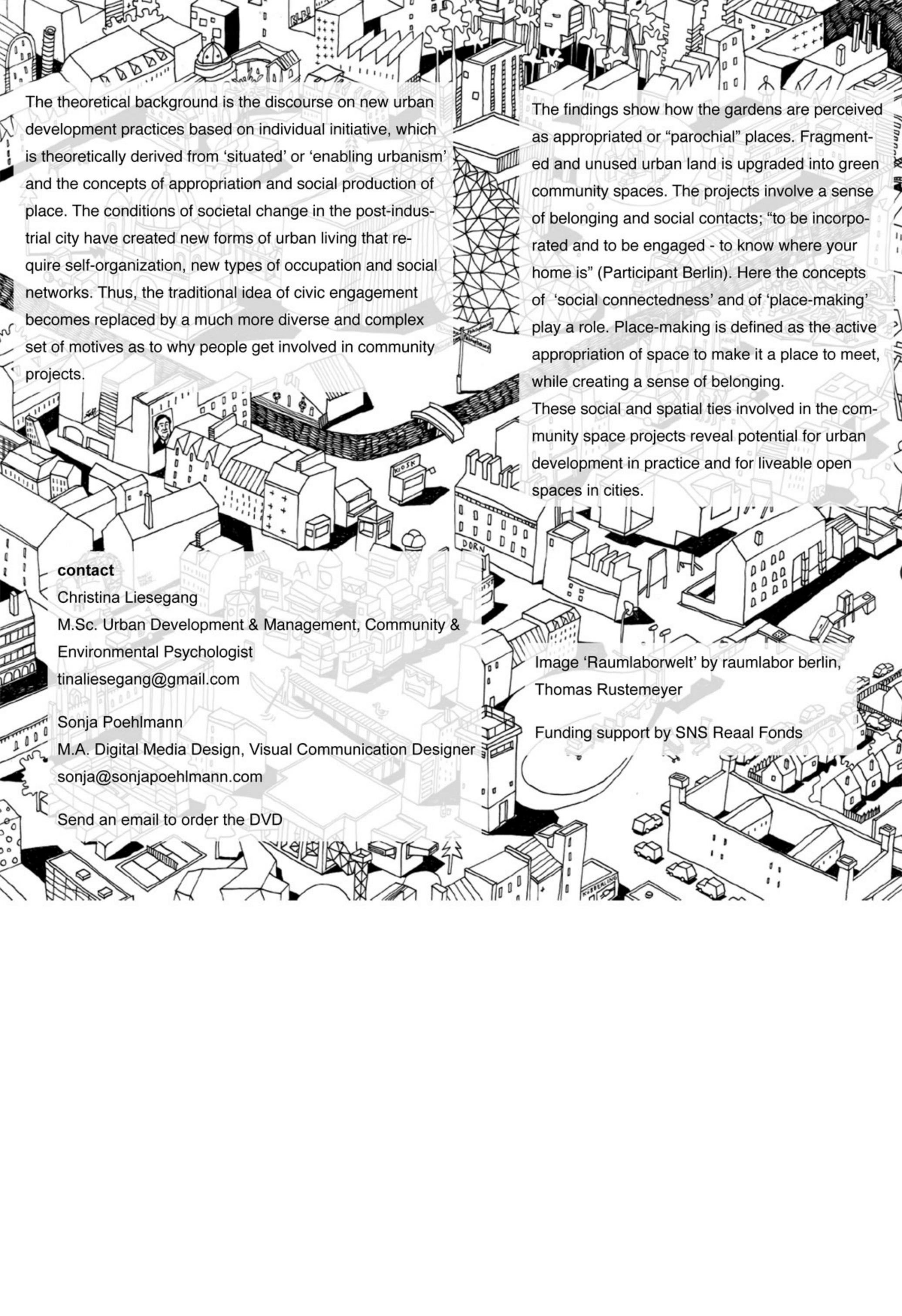
research

The urban sociological research (see Master's thesis at reading lounge) is based on the interest in participatory approaches to urban development. Community garden projects are seen as examples of citizen engagement in the creation of public spaces.

The video is meant to be an experimental approach to how empirical interview material can be transformed into a film document. The film chapters are based on selected research results:

- freedom to leave & to do what you like
- need for occupation
- to create something
- togetherness
- sense of belonging & home
- feeling of engagement
- meeting place
- a place that holds
- creating a place
- an own garden in urban space

Based on an intercontextual study of two cases in Berlin and Rotterdam, the objective is to explore why people get involved in such community projects, focusing on the concerned social and place-making processes. The aim is to investigate the meanings of the garden projects for the different actors and the benefits gained from the engagement.



The theoretical background is the discourse on new urban development practices based on individual initiative, which is theoretically derived from 'situated' or 'enabling urbanism' and the concepts of appropriation and social production of place. The conditions of societal change in the post-industrial city have created new forms of urban living that require self-organization, new types of occupation and social networks. Thus, the traditional idea of civic engagement becomes replaced by a much more diverse and complex set of motives as to why people get involved in community projects.

The findings show how the gardens are perceived as appropriated or "parochial" places. Fragmented and unused urban land is upgraded into green community spaces. The projects involve a sense of belonging and social contacts; "to be incorporated and to be engaged - to know where your home is" (Participant Berlin). Here the concepts of 'social connectedness' and of 'place-making' play a role. Place-making is defined as the active appropriation of space to make it a place to meet, while creating a sense of belonging.

These social and spatial ties involved in the community space projects reveal potential for urban development in practice and for liveable open spaces in cities.

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Send an email to order the DVD

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Funding support by SNS Reaal Fonds



Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS)

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Master in Urban Management and Development

Thesis

Reinventing public urban spaces in the example of community garden projects in Berlin and Rotterdam

An empirical study on community engagement and place-making processes

Christina Liesegang, Germany

Supervisors: Jan Fransen, Prof. Talja Blokland

January 2009

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Bürgergarten Laskerwiese e.V. in Berlin and its members for the opportunity to join them during summer 2008 as well as the Wijktuin het Oude Westen and all its members for receiving me cordially and spending time with me. Without my interview partners this research would not have a content and the research film would not have protagonists.

For the great supervision and support I would like to thank Jan Fransen as well as Prof. Talja Blokland.

For the funding of my research film I thank SNS Reaal Fonds.

I would like to express my gratefulness especially to Sonja Pöhlmann for making the film and the graphic design of this project.

Summary

This research is an empirical study on community engagement in public urban spaces in the example of community garden projects in Berlin and Rotterdam. The topic is based on the interest in participatory approaches to urban development that aim at liveability and social sustainability in urban neighborhoods. Community garden projects are interesting examples where citizens get involved in the creation and the maintenance of public or semi-public urban spaces. In most cases empty, abandoned land is used and upgraded and community spaces as well as access to urban nature are created.

The research involves an ‘intercontextual’ study of two case study projects in different cities, in order to investigate the universality of the phenomenon of community gardens that exist in many places all over the world. The research objective is to explore why people get involved in community projects in public space, focusing on the concerned social and place-bound processes. The aim is to investigate the meanings of the garden projects for the different participating and non-participating actors and the benefits gained from the engagement.

The central research question is: Which social processes and project features make the community gardens be understood by the organizers, participants, and surrounding neighbors as projects that foster processes of place-making and social connectedness?

The main concept investigated is place-making. In my definition, based on the empirical results and the theoretical literature, it means the active physical and social appropriation of space to make it a place to meet and ‘to be’, which involves feelings of engagement and a sense of belonging.

The study focuses on so-called community or neighborhood gardens which usually are legal or formally recognized and based on grass-roots initiatives and self-organization. They can be defined as incorporating individual but mainly collective gardening activities on an urban site granting semi-public or public access to other users. The two case study projects were selected with regards to these characteristics.

The community garden projects were systematically analyzed concerning their place characteristics, social and organizational features, aspects of partnership with public institutions and dimensions such as public vs. non-public accessibility and collective vs. individual gardening. A topic that was identified to play a crucial role is civic engagement with its different forms and functions.

The research design is characterized by two case studies and three respondent groups as well as by the triangulation of qualitative empirical data sources: semi-structured in-depth interviews, questionnaires, and participant observation. Ethnographical film research is included in the data collection (all interviews were recorded with digital video) and analysis. It is used as documenting tool resulting in a research film that is aimed at a broader non-academic and practice-based public.

The data analysis was conducted on the basis of the transcribed interviews, questionnaires, and field notes that were coded and categorized. The resulting categories were further analyzed concerning their interrelationships based on the methodology of Grounded Theory, resulting in a systematically developed and empirically grounded conceptual model.

This conceptual model comprises all main empirical findings. The findings are categorized into cross-cutting meanings or central features of the community garden projects, specific personal benefits and the overall central concept of place-making. Briefly summarized, the different central features of the garden projects ('to have a place to be', 'to do together /joint activities', 'to create something', 'to be free to leave and to do what you like' and 'to search for togetherness and community') and the personal benefits gained from the engagement define what the community gardens mean in the perception of the respondents. This relates to processes of place-making and the creation of spatial and social ties. Social contacts and networks are created, accessed and used within the project group but also by the users of the community garden project. These processes are inherent to the gardening activity in both garden projects. In the study the findings are related to different theoretical concepts. Place-making in the community gardens is connected to the notion of 'parochial realm territories' (Lofland 1998) and to the social 'production of place' through actions and social relations by the users of (public) space (Blokland 2001). The findings show that appropriation of space can lead to feelings of ownership and belonging. At the same time it can involve unintended exclusionary effects for people who feel like entering a "home territory" when entering the garden.

The developed conceptual model can be used as a tool to understand and analyze community garden projects, especially concerning the conditions for a long term, well balanced and well functioning project. So, it can be applied to the practice of creating such garden projects and to community involvement in public space projects in general.

My findings show that community gardens and the involved place-making processes have a potential for social urban development in practice and the creation of urban place quality. From the analysis of the project approaches lesson can be learned for the functioning of community gardens, for the implications on neighborhood development and for partnerships between government and civil society organizations. Thereby, this research can make a contribution as an empirically grounded theoretical analysis that can be directly applied in the practice of urban development and management.

Keywords: *public urban space, community engagement, place-making, social connectedness/social capital, social urban development,*

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the topic and rationale

*“The common thing is that they like to be here. Not even to work here but to be here.
To be in the garden and see the green around them.”
(Wilma, participant, community garden “Wijktuin”, Rotterdam)*

This research is based on an interest in urban development approaches that focus on the inhabitants and social urban development in the endeavor to develop liveable and socially sustainable cities. For such an approach the needs and potentials of the people have to be incorporated on a small scale and local base. Especially in marginalized neighborhoods there is a need for community spaces and for a public domain where people gather, meet and interact. This thesis focuses on open and green spaces in European cities as well as the creation and use of public spaces in community garden projects. In these projects, citizens get involved in the creation and the maintenance of public or semi-public urban spaces and in processes of place-making and social connectedness. Place-making can be defined as the (physical and social) appropriation of space to make it a home, creating a sense of belonging to a place.

When working in social urban development and aiming at a participatory approach to it, we need to know why people get involved in community projects in public or semi-public realm and why they abstain from it. Therefore, the principle aim of this research is to find out about the benefits the group and the individuals gain from such community projects that motivate them to engage in public space. These benefits can be observed directly as well as they can be interpreted from the meanings community garden projects have for the participating and non-participating actors. The objective is to explore the meanings and the perceptions of those urban garden projects for the organizers, participants, and surrounding neighbors and to what extent they relate to the concept of place-making.

The main research question: *Which social processes and project features make the community gardens become understood by the organizers, participants, and surrounding neighbors as projects that foster processes of place-making and social connectedness?*

Sub-questions:

- 1. What are the meanings and perceived benefits of community garden projects in the understanding of the organizers, participants, and surrounding neighbors?*
- 2. Do the projects involve place-making and social connectedness?*
- 3. Through which processes and project features of the community gardens are place-making processes generated?*

Rationale and background of the topic

The rationale and background of the research topic and questions as well as the motivation to study community gardens as examples of citizen involvement in public space projects is explained in the following aspects.

In the context of urban and societal structural changes in the post-industrial city one effect is that the *governments are drawing back* from their tasks in urban development and social service provision. A shift of responsibility to the sphere of the private sector and the civil society can be observed. Many authors talk about “new urban development based on individual initiative” (Fezer & Heyden 2007) and a “new mode of governance” (Mayer 2003). So, there is a *demand for participation* of the non-government sector and public spaces become increasingly semi-public in nature. Self-help structures and participatory processes are becoming increasingly important. New kinds of informal and formal partnerships evolve and there is an interest to determine what local communities are willing to contribute under which conditions.

At the same time, complex conditions of societal transformation lead to economic and work related changes as well as to a *loss of traditional securities and social bonds* and, thereby, new forms of living evolve. These can be said to require self-organization, new types of occupation and social networks. The traditional idea of volunteering and civic engagement is replaced by a much more diverse and complex set of motives why people get involved in community projects in public space such as community gardens. What meanings, values and ideas are behind this?

My notion is that community gardens as public or semi-public green spaces create certain *urban or place qualities* for the neighborhood and for the city in general. Most of the time empty, abandoned land is used and upgraded and community spaces as well as access to urban nature are created. Many cities have problems of neglected public spaces due to limited financial resources (Rosol 2006) and the quality of life in the neighborhood is reduced.

Therefore, nowadays the participation of residents is wanted in the creation and maintenance of public green spaces by different entities (municipalities, politicians, urban development agencies, see Rosol 2006). In Berlin, for example, there is a lot of *space available* for public uses, and the formation of community gardens often is encouraged by the local governments, not only for temporary use (ed. Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung 2007b). This ‘spatial freedom’ has created new kinds of public urban spaces also in other European cities.

Figure 1: Public space design in Rotterdam and urban garden project (Wijktuin het Oude Westen)



From the socio-psychological perspective, involvement of citizen and self-organization in community projects are seen as factors that can lead to the *creation of social resources and empowerment*. Through becoming active in the public realm, through place-making and joint action, social contacts and networks are created. This can also involve the access to institutions and organizations. Community gardens, especially the so-called “Intercultural Gardens”, can have an integration function for people of different cultural and social backgrounds.

I have observed in my previous work and research that involvement in community projects can be experienced as personally rewarding, and qualities of collective action, social bonds, and place attachment are created. For the initiation of new projects it would be very useful to know more about these qualities and how to integrate them in urban development.

Scope of the research

The aim of my research is to gain an understanding of the processes and mechanisms in community projects. Next to gaining conceptual knowledge, the goal is to generate research results that are relevant and useful for the practice of social urban development and for the

design of new projects. Besides, film is used as research method in order to create a document that will reach a broader practice-based public.

The research involves an ‘intercontextual’ study of different cases in order to investigate the universality of the phenomenon of community gardens that are being implemented in many places all over the world. Projects in two different cities are investigated (similar but contrasting cases) in order to look at community gardening as a phenomenon involving processes and mechanisms that are considered to be existing and observable in different places. The processes of place-making and the creation of social connectedness are seen as transferable concepts that may or may not occur in both projects in different cities.

Besides, it is of interest to investigate projects in two different urban contexts in order to find broader trends. My personal learning benefit was that I could get an insight in open space projects in both settings and learnt about different approaches and contextual conditions.

1.2 On the creation of open green spaces and urban gardens in Rotterdam and Berlin

The broad context investigated in this study is community involvement in public urban spaces in the two cities of Berlin and Rotterdam. Both cities have problems with neglected public spaces, waste disposal, insecurity and a resulting bad image of open space. In Berlin there is an abundance of available spaces but resources to maintain them are very limited. In Rotterdam I observed that especially a ‘balanced’ use of public spaces and insecurity problems have led in some cases to a ‘cleaning and clearing’ spatial design and to revitalization endeavors. In both cities there is a discourse for new approaches and it is experimented with the involvement of citizens in public space creation and maintenance.

A great part of the German discourse focuses on the temporary use (‘Zwischennutzung’) of unused urban spaces (‘Brachen’) and the incorporation of the creative “urban pioneers” in urban development strategies (ed. Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung 2007b). The arising garden and park projects can be considered as a new phenomenon in which publicly accessible green spaces are maintained and/or created by private actors (“a new type of open space / ‘neuer Freiraumtyp’”, Rosol 2006). In this research I explore the phenomenon of urban gardening, in particular community gardens, as example for community involvement in public space.

Urban gardening

First of all, looking at definitions and project characteristics, different typologies of urban gardens can be differentiated (see Table 1 below). I distinguish these forms of gardening from urban agriculture which I exclude here. The latter is referring to agricultural activities mostly for consumption and informal subsistence within urban territory (Haidle & Arndt 2007). There are interesting forms of urban gardening such as “Guerilla Gardening” which can be defined as gardening in public space without official permission or “the illicit cultivation of someone else’s land” (Reynolds 2008, p. 16). Likewise, there are urban gardens that involve squatting and protest or art activities.

In my case study research I focus merely on so-called community, neighborhood or “intercultural” gardens which usually are legal or formally recognized and based on grass-

roots initiatives. They can be defined as incorporating individual but mainly collective gardening activities on an urban site granting semi-public or public access.

The concept of community gardens stems from the USA and Canada of the 1970s and dealt with the collective use of urban waste land in marginalized neighborhoods for communal gardening activities. The first garden was founded in New York City in 1973 (“Liz Christy Garden”) and many projects followed. “By the late 1990s, the city had more than 700 gardens with thousands of participants.” (Pinderhughes 2004). Although most of those gardens were cleared and sold in later years, the community garden movement has been quite influential in NYC. It continues to be recognized as model for projects all over the world.

It is important to note that community gardening is not only about gardening which is shown in an abundance of research, websites, associations etc. According to the American Community Gardening Association, community gardens improve the quality of life, provide a catalyst for neighborhood and community development, stimulate social interaction, encourage self-reliance, beautify neighborhood, preserve green space (improve urban climate, cooling, clean air, less sealing), improve housing, create opportunity for recreation, exercise, therapy, and education, produce nutritious and affordable food, conserve resources, reduce crime, create income opportunities and economic development, provide opportunities for intergenerational and cross-cultural connections (list adapted from: American Community Gardening Association 2008).

This long list shows the importance that is given to the garden projects and the meanings connected to them, especially in the North American research and practice. It also shows the potential of community garden projects for urban development in general. “By converting dilapidated vacant lots into usable garden spaces, community gardeners endeavor to renew their declining urban neighborhoods.” (Glover 2004, p. 143). Community gardens are associated with upgrading and enhancement of neighborhood quality and liveability. They involve collective action and the formation of social networks; therefore they are considered to be important for community development (Glover 2004). This thesis shows that garden projects have features that make them very different not only from conventional public spaces and parks, private gardens and allotments, but also from other community projects in general.

Trends on urban gardens and public space projects in both cities:

Berlin

Community gardens are a popular issue in Germany. There is even a national foundation for intercultural gardens (“Stiftung Interkultur”) whose goal is to coordinate and create networks of all activities related to intercultural gardens¹. The foundation’s website presents a growing number of 80 gardens in 50 cities all over Germany. There are plans to set up a similar coordinating institution for the city of Berlin which hosts most urban gardens. In doing this research I identified approximately 35 community garden projects and more than 5

¹ “Intercultural Gardens” are community gardens with focus on intercultural integration and the involvement of migrants. “In intercultural garden projects meet people with different ethnic-cultural and also different social milieus, life styles and age groups” (Stiftung Interkultur n.d.).

community-driven park projects in Berlin (see Table 1 below). The Berlin government officially supports different kinds of public space projects with private actor involvement such as community-driven gardens and parks.

Rotterdam

A similar discourse on urban gardens and public space projects exists in Holland but, as far as I could observe, it is different in nature. In Rotterdam in particular, there exist many garden projects. Most of them are semi-private tenant gardens as presented in the “Verborgten Tuinen 2008”, a guide through 120 gardens throughout Rotterdam. I could identify only very few “genuine” community gardens (i.e. at least semi-public & managed by the community). The garden projects identified were either initiated or managed by housing corporations or contracted urban development companies or they were community-based but maintained by the municipality (see Table 1 below). In terms of community involvement in public greening there are several programs for community-based upgrading (e.g. “Opzoomeren”, “Mensen maken de stad”). These are more concerned with neighborhood “beautification” where small grants are given to resident groups for putting up buckets, street planting, and the like. There are also examples of squatted gardens (e.g. “Raktuin”, Crooswijk) and “illegal” gardening activities in public spaces (e.g. the “illegal Park”, Nodereiland). However, the government and other institutions seem to play a strong role in the organization of public green spaces and in community participation.²

In both cities the public space and garden projects are strongly connected to neighborhood development institutions and programs (e.g. in Berlin “Soziale Stadt” program and in Rotterdam “Opbouwwerk”).

2 Even activities associated with “Guerilla Gardening” are tried to be organized in a top-down manner both in street side greening projects (“Opzoomeren” program). Interestingly, the topic is also used in city marketing in a campaign on “Gorilla Gardening” in the framework of the Groenjaar Rotterdam (on youtube).

Table 1: Urban gardening – different project types

<i>Project types:</i>
1. Community gardens based on grass-root initiatives, managed by the community (e.g. gardens investigated in this study, many “intercultural” gardens in Berlin)
2. Neighborhood gardens created and maintained with support of the municipality or housing corporation with community participation (e.g. “Binnentuin de SCHUT“, „Jakobustuin“, „Schat van Schoonderloo“, Rotterdam)
3. Gardens implemented and managed by an institution with community participation such as by urban development companies (e.g. “Proefpark de Punt” & “Bloementuin”, Rotterdam by “Creatif Beheer”)
4. Gardens belonging to institutions, specific themes, e.g. “intergenerational garden”, school gardens & “therapeutic garden” (e.g. “Interkultureller Heilgarten”, Berlin)
5. “Tenant gardens”, individual private gardens with collective areas, mostly implemented by housing corporations (e.g. ‘Inner gardens’ & “Volkstuintjes” in Oude Westen, Rotterdam)
6. “Neighborhood beautification projects”, official programs, grants for resident groups for collective planting and greening (e.g. “Opzoomeren”, Rotterdam)
7. Community-driven public park projects as ‘reuse of wasteland’ from abandoned infrastructure or industrial sites (e.g. “Südgelände Park”, Berlin)
8. “Guerrilla Gardening”, non-formal/illegal activities, including ‘garden squatting’ on empty plots (e.g. „Rosa Rose“, Berlin), street side greening and planting in tree pits
9. Protest & activism against public/governmental action on green urban spaces (e.g. „Illegal ‘park’ op Noordereiland“, Rotterdam)
10. Temporary artist interventions in public space with community participation (e.g. project “Kampf auf dem Parkdeck”, Berlin)

1.3 Presentation of the thesis structure

This first chapter has given an introduction to the topic and the main research question with its background. Furthermore I introduced the study area: the creation of open green spaces and urban gardens with regards to developments in the respective cities. Community gardens as chosen form of urban gardening were defined.

In Chapter 2 the central aspects of community garden projects are analyzed and discussed with regards to their physical, social, organizational, institutional, and political context and their different forms and features.

Subsequently, the conceptual framework is presented and explained which leads to an overview of the related theoretical literature. Here, I focus on literature on the 'place perspective' (that means on public space and public/parochial realms as well as urban place quality), on place making theories and on the social perspective in particular the concept of social connectedness.

In Chapter 3 the research design and methodology, the case selection including the case description, the methodology of data collection and analysis as well as a reflection of the methodological approach is described.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the empirical analysis on the perceptions of community gardens by organizers, participants, and surrounding neighbors in form of the central categories and the conceptual model that resulted from relating all findings in a final result scheme. These results are discussed in relation to the theoretical literature. Furthermore, the findings on the differences between the respondent groups (organizers, participants and surrounding neighbors) are discussed. The findings on the organizational features and on the different project approaches of the two case study projects are discussed in the connection conceptual analysis.

The last Chapter 5 presents the conclusions on the empirical results with respect to theoretical and practical implications. A short reflection of the methodological approach and a final outlook and recommendations for further research are given.

An additional part of my thesis, the research film "Urban green - A study on community garden projects in Berlin and Rotterdam" can be found in the appendix. The film document illustrates the community garden projects and interviewees and is based on the empirical conceptual model.

Chapter 2: Concepts and theoretical context

2.1 Community gardens - central aspects

Community gardens are not to be seen merely as a phenomenon but as a complex social, organizational and institutional setting. That is why I speak about “community garden projects” in order to indicate that I do neither refer to the physical space of the garden nor to the gardening activity, but to the various elements comprising a project. The analysis has to include the physical (geographical), social, organizational, institutional, and political context.

Actors

In the community garden projects there are a variety of different actors involved: the participants who can be gardeners or people that use the garden and contribute with other activities than gardening. The organizers of the garden differ usually in their contributions since they are often times less involved in the gardening itself but in the administration, in fund-raising etc. The organizers often come from institutional backgrounds; they might be professional and paid as staff. They might again differ from the initiators of a garden project, who sometimes are not involved in the gardening anymore.

Place - local context and neighborhood

Community gardens are place-bound and have to be seen in their local geographical context of the garden terrain itself, the immediate surroundings, the neighborhood and the municipality. The garden projects create social and green spaces in an urban setting and thereby may add to the urban or place quality of the neighborhood. So the garden as a place is “more than a context” (Blokland 2001) because the notion of place implies that it is socially produced by the people (see Chapter 2.3).

Social and organizational structure

Social structures can differ in garden projects. This thesis looks at projects that are in one way or another ‘mixed’, meaning a social mixture (not only middle class), a mixture of ethnic cultures, life styles, and/or age groups. It is also important how the group was formed, whether family and friendship bonds are important etc. There are explicit functions and hierarchies, and implicit roles constitute the community garden group. Different social networks, insiders and outsiders, gatekeepers and passive members might exist. So the garden projects might be inclusionary or exclusionary in their practices, homogeneous or heterogeneous in their composition.

Institutional and political context

Like all publicly funded projects that are involved in neighborhood issues, garden projects have a political-public dimension. They are involved with concerns of the local and the municipal government. They have to deal with different departments and need political backing. They are supported or ignored by politicians and other different local stakeholders and institutions. Institutions involved could be neighborhood associations, non-governmental organizations (NGO’s), foundations, neighborhood service agencies and community building organizations as well as housing corporations or other private organizations.

Different forms and features of community gardens

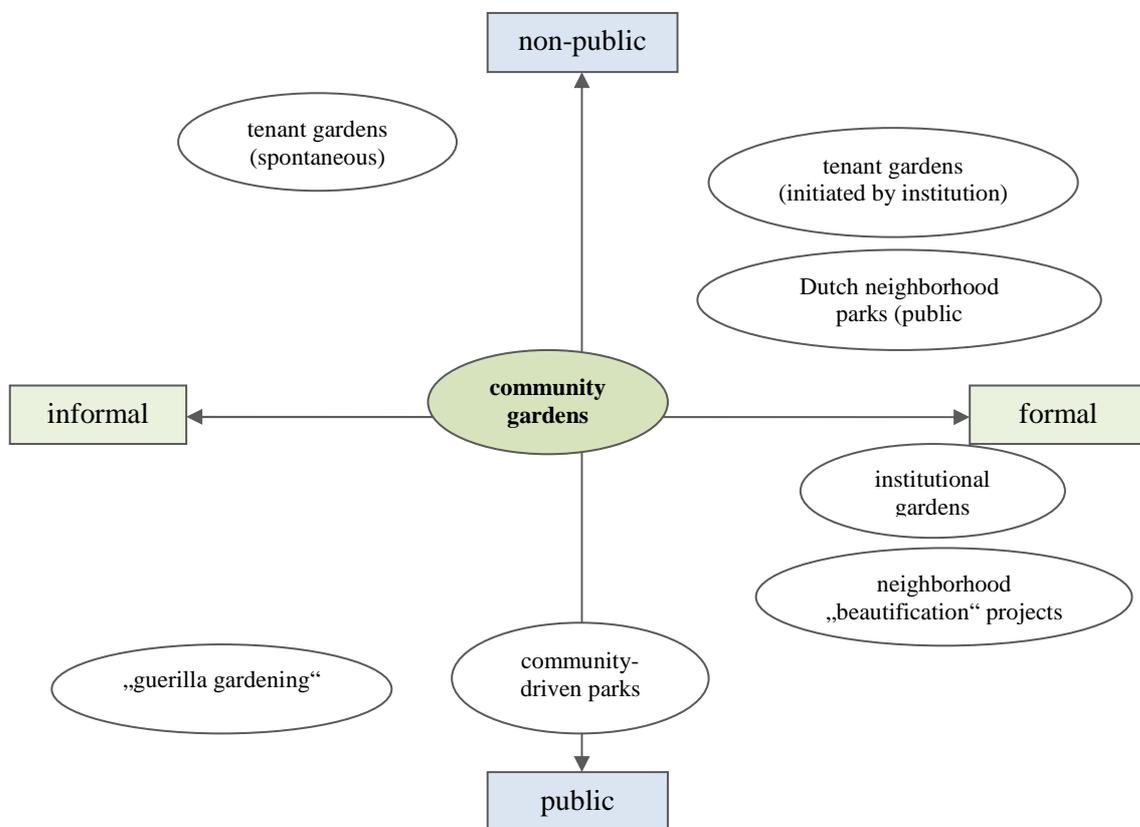
Garden and open space projects can differ strongly in the dimension of private and public access. They can be non-public vs. semi-public projects (limited access for public visitors) or public projects (extended opening hours or completely open to public).

Another essential difference concerns the degree of individual respectively collective use of the garden (an own patch for each participant vs. gardening on communal plot). These categories are connected with the private vs. public dimension but may not be mistaken for the same. So, a collective project does not have to be open to the public. In my study I only investigate projects where at least part of the gardening is collective and public access is given at least by opening hours.

Urban garden project also can be differentiated concerning their informal vs. formal organization. They can be very *informal, self-organized, bottom-up*, and even spontaneous. On the other hand they can be *formalized* and involving different institutions. So they can be completely *formal, institutional, and top-down* in their organization. The involved funding, administrative and legal demands usually require at some point a formal or legal status.

In my analysis of the different open space projects existing in Berlin and Rotterdam the differentiation of projects on the two dimensions non-public vs. public and informal vs. formal turned out to be a useful typological framework to work with (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Project typologies related to the dimensions non-public vs. public and informal vs. formal



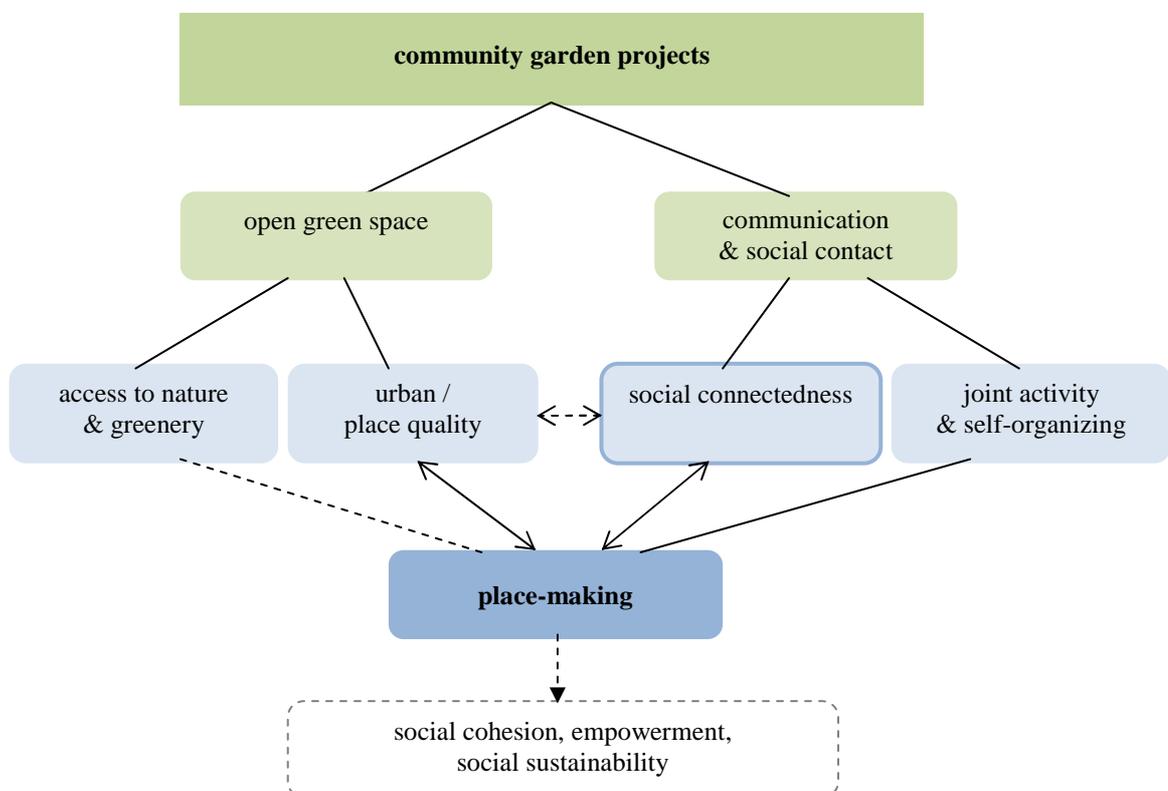
Another differentiation that can play a role in the analysis of community garden projects is that of temporary vs. permanent projects. Some community garden projects are using public or private vacant land temporarily that is reserved for other uses, so they are determined to leave after a short term, whereas other projects are implemented under long-term and permanent conditions.

2.2 Conceptual framework

The following conceptualization on processes related to community garden projects is aiming at explaining my pre-conception of the topic area before doing the empirical field work.

Community garden projects can be conceptualized in a spatial and a social dimension. On the one hand, they are *open and green spaces* that involve the quality of access to nature and gardening and provide the urban environment with green and recreational qualities of place and liveability. This is what I call *urban or place quality* which is meant here in a physical or spatial sense. On the other hand community gardens are social places of communication and contact. As part of this contact aspect, social connectedness is pointed out, and the involvement of joint activities and self-organization plays a role. *Social connectedness* is considered especially important for community garden projects and therefore it is a key concept to be investigated. Social connectedness decodes as resources a person or a group gains from building up social networks and getting involved in social relations (referring to bonding and bridging social capital, Putnam 2000).

Figure 3: Conceptual framework (pre-empirical)



In my conceptual framework the concepts at the intermediary level: urban/place quality, social connectedness, and joint activity influence the central concept to be investigated: *place-making*, that combines the social and the spatial aspects. The aspect of access to nature and greenery is investigated less in this thesis.

Place-making can be defined as physical appropriation of space to make it a home and use it as a social meeting place. It implies a feeling of place attachment or the creation of place identity and belonging to a place that is always socially produced. Besides, for place-making the characteristics of the act of gardening itself are relevant (connection to ground, nature, appropriation, harvesting own vegetable).

The different concepts, urban/place quality, social connectedness and joint activity & self-organization, are subsumed in the notion of place-making and are seen as factors - among others – that can create social cohesion, empowerment and social sustainability in a neighborhood community. These ‘higher level concepts’ are not investigated in my study.

This conceptual framework constitutes the starting point for my empirical and theoretical analysis. However, since my thesis is based the methodological approach to develop an empirically grounded understanding of the research area, this framework should be seen as a ‘pre-empirical conceptualization’, that is an idea of the topic which is to be investigated and newly formulated based on the empirical findings.

2.3 Overview on the theoretical literature

“Few fields are so clearly interdisciplinary in nature’ as the study of human feelings about places” (Hummon 1992, p. 253). Community garden projects and place-making processes, in particular, have to be researched as truly interdisciplinary and multi-dimensional phenomena. The following overview of the relevant theoretical approaches related to my research topic involves theoretical and non-theoretical approaches from different disciplines.³

2.3.1 The place perspective – ‘place quality’ and ‘social territories’

This research is not looking at community involvement in general but at the ‘located and situated’ engagement in public space within the context of an urban neighborhood. Thereby, it is crucial to involve the ‘place perspective’ in the conceptual approach to investigating community garden projects.

³ There is an abundance of research on community gardens in the USA and Canada which cannot be reviewed here. I have reviewed recent studies that deal with the same topics or the same localities Berlin and Rotterdam. For example, there is the comprehensive dissertation by Rosol (2006) who investigates civic engagement and community gardens in Berlin from a geographical perspective. Master’s theses like Jahnke (2007) investigate the phenomenon of Guerilla Gardening and Haidle & Arndt (2007) look at community gardens and urban agriculture in Berlin and internationally. Diemont & Vos (2004) have conducted a Master thesis project on social cohesion, investigating the Wijk Park Oude Westen in Rotterdam.

The notion of place

This thesis focuses on the meanings of community gardens as places, and the meanings people attribute to these places are analyzed. So, I refer to urban *place* and not to *space*. Places are used spaces; they are existing in the social relations connected to them. Therefore they are 'socially produced'. Altman & Low (1992) state that place "refers to space that has been given meaning through personal, group, or cultural processes" (p. 5)⁴. According to Lofland (1998) places are "especially meaningful spaces" charged with emotions and associations (p. 64). Likewise, Kusenbach defines place as "chunks and features of the physical environment that are highly saturated with individual and collective meanings" (Kusenbach 2008, p. 226). Lofland (1998) and Kusenbach (2008) take a symbolic interactionist approach, focusing on social relationships and networks and take into account the "significant role of place as an important aspect in understanding communities" (Kusenbach 2008, p. 226).

According to Blokland (2001) the built environment itself has no meaning but becomes a space/place by social action (p. 270). Places are symbolic expressions of social relations (*ibid*). Blokland focuses on how places acquire identities and draws on Massey (1994) who defines place as a "set of social relations which interact at a particular location" (p. 168). Massey has formulated a framework on how places acquire identities; they are not neutral or merely physical. Massey talks about „social spaces“, that are articulations of social relations and about how places can be understood as „porous networks of social relations“ (Massey 1994, pp. 120-121). In her theoretical concept she rejects the division between space and time so that places are „particular moments in such intersecting social relations, nets of which have over time been constructed, laid down, interacted with another, decayed and renewed“ (*ibid*, p. 120).

This understanding of geographical space as fundamentally social is also salient in the works of Lefèbvre (1970/1991) and his followers on the "social production of space". He focuses on „urban environments as the contexts of everyday life and the expression of social relations of production“ (Shields 2004, p. 209) (see below).

On public space and public domain

Community garden projects are semi-public or public urban spaces or places. Their potential as such is analyzed by putting an emphasis both on the physical and the social aspects of public space.

Public space can be simply defined by its accessibility. "Public space is in essence a space that is freely accessible for everyone: Public is the opposite of private" (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001, p. 11). In addition, it is important to incorporate the idea of diversity and social contact that most authors attribute to public space such as in the concepts of public domain and public realm. Public spaces can - but do not automatically - function as public domain defined as "places where an exchange between different social groups is possible and also actually occurs" (*ibid*, p. 11). Hajer and Reijndorp consider the key aspect concerning public space to be exchange and "encounter of the other". Here the focus lies on the "places of

⁴ Note: In contrast to Altman & Low (1992) in this thesis the focus is on tangible and definable places only (not symbolic).

shared experience by people from different backgrounds or with dissimilar interest” (*ibid*, p. 11). In this sense the question arises if community gardens are public domains, meaning there are different groups involved that have an interest in the same location (this is investigated in this thesis, see Chapter 4.3). The assumption that there is instead one particular group using public space leads to the idea of “parochialization” of public space. Consequently, it is useful to incorporate the discourse on public realm by Lofland (1998) in the research on community gardens.

Lofland – public and parochial realm

Lofland (1998) puts an emphasis on both the physical and the social aspect in her analysis of public „realm“, which she calls ‘social territory’. She investigates patterns and principles that guide people’s interactions in the public realm. Lofland distinguishes the public from the parochial (“parochial realm territory”), which means that public spaces are appropriated by a certain group in social practices and derive their character from the groups that frequent the space (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001, p. 85).⁵ Here she differentiates parochial realm (locations) from the physical parochial space, stressing that parochial social realms might “be out of place” when they are not located in parochial space (Lofland 1998, p. 12). So, Lofland depicts an “independent relationship between realms and their spaces” (*ibid*, p. 12). For example, she uses the image of “bubbles”, small pieces of private realm that may intrude into public or parochial space, such as ‘reserving’ portions of public parks for family reunions, creating “little bubbles of private space in a sea of public or parochial territory”. Those are “a kind of mobile ‘home territory’ which they may move about with them from setting to setting.” (*ibid*, p. 13, quoting Lofland 1985).

So, the crucial point here is that public space is not a neutral meeting place for all social groups. There are claims on and ownership for it by its users that can result in exclusionary practices. Hajer & Reijndorp (2001) argue that even if public spaces are dominated by a relatively homogeneous group, it might still not be one’s own group (p. 88). The “key experience with shared use of space often involve entering the parochial domains of ‘others’” (*ibid*, p. 88).

Urban place quality and liveability

Not only the social quality of encounter is important for the discourse on public space, but at the same time there is a general notion that public spaces ‘work’ physically and socially, add significantly to the quality of the urban environment or place quality in a neighborhood (see also “community satisfaction”, Hummon 1992). For example the author William Whyte (1980) connects “healthy places that people like” to happiness (p. 7). Accordingly, there is a direct connection between public space, place quality in the sense of urban living quality and liveability⁶.

⁵ The parochialization of public space is to be differentiated from the notion of semi-public or semi-private space. This means, as described before, that the access to place is actually limited formally, e.g. by fences and opening hours.

⁶ According to Evans (2002) liveability can be defined as the existence of quality of the environment and of livelihoods for the citizen in a neighborhood (p. 2).

In his writings on the creation of “public community space” Whyte (1980) promotes spaces that facilitate civic engagement and social interaction. His approach is concentrated on the (bottom-up) design of urban spaces that is based on the observations on what people want and need in public space (such as sitting space, food facilities, sun etc.). There is an abundance of similar analyses on the conditions of quality public space. Jacobs (1961/1993) shows in her analysis on the “uses of neighborhood parks” in American cities that there needs to be a mixture of functions in the surroundings and different kinds of users to create potential for a park. So the focus of park design should be on a mixture of uses and bringing different user groups together. Only when this is taken into account, the people “enliven and support well-located parks that can thus give back grace and delight to their neighborhoods” (Jacobs 1961/1993, p. 145). Recent writings such as Shaftoe (2008) follow this discourse and come up with a ‘cookbook’ list of how to design a safe and “convivial” public space.

To conclude, in the theoretical literature there is a link between public spaces, social and physical urban quality, and liveability. Moreover, liveability in a neighborhood can be linked to community development, involving spatial & social ties (and thereby to place-making). This conceptual relationship is investigated in the following chapters.

Jane Jacobs (1961/1993) has stressed public spaces, in particular parks, do not per se add quality to the neighborhood but “neighborhood parks themselves are directly and drastically affected by the way the neighborhood acts upon them” (p. 124). Here, there is a link to the question: who creates the public spaces? Many authors especially Shaftoe (2008) imply a top-down design, others a participatory design (Whyte 1980) still perceiving the users as consumers of public space. However, the notion that places are created by their users and their interactions plays an important role in the place perspective presented. This leads me to another theoretical line that focuses on the appropriation of public space by civil society actors - in the following chapter.

2.3.2 Theories on place-making

Place-making has been introduced in Chapter 2.2, and as an empirical concept it will be explained based on my findings in Chapter 4. In this chapter the theoretical foundations will be discussed. On the basis of my pre-empirical conceptual framework my working definition of place-making is: the sense of home and belonging to a place that is socially produced and connected to the appropriation of space and the use of space as a meeting place.

There are several related theoretical concepts that can be referred to, such as “place-making” according to Blokland (2008a), “identity of a place” (Massey 1994), “person-to-place relations” (Lofland 1998), and “community attachment” by Hummon (1992). My theoretical analysis also strongly draws from the concept of “place attachment” as defined by Low & Altman (1992).

In contrast to place attachment which focuses on the feelings of people towards a place, the concept of place-making as I use it goes beyond the sentiment level incorporating the “making” aspect, of active production, appropriation and creation as well as the “meeting” aspect, the place as location of social encounter and public realm.

Low & Altman on place attachment

People feel attached to a place, feel that they belong there and are territorial in their behavior (Low & Altman 1992, p. 5). This “people-place bonding”, can be an individual feeling or community members collectively share attachments to place. So it is crucial to take into account that place attachment “simultaneously involves individual, social, and cultural processes” (*ibid*, p. 9).

In their edited book Low & Altman systematically look at place attachment as a “complex and multifaceted concept” from a phenomenological perspective. Place attachment – ‘the bonding of people to place’ - “subsumes or is subsumed by a variety of analogous ideas” such as place identity, sense of place or rootedness, environmental embeddedness, and community attachment (*ibid*, pp. 2-3).⁷ Place attachment as “integrating concept” incorporates several interrelated aspects “an interplay of affect and emotions, knowledge and beliefs, and behaviors and actions in reference to a place” (*ibid*, p. 5, quoting Proshansky et al. 1983).

One important aspect is that “places are contexts in which interpersonal, community and cultural relationships occur, and it is to those social relationships not just to a place *qua* place, to which people are attached” (Low & Altman 1992, p. 7). Thereby, the attachment is not to a physical place “but may be primarily associated with the meanings of and experiences in a place” (*ibid*, p. 7).

In their analysis on the development of place attachment, the authors surprisingly do not refer to processes of creation, appropriation and interaction with space such as it is happening in community gardens, as factors for the formation of place attachment. The argument that place attachment involves “shared affective meanings and activities associated with place” (*ibid*, p. 9) comes closest to the observation that place-making processes involve an activity part.

The existence of place attachment is stated to be leading to solidarity through positive effects on adherence to common values and norms, a willingness to participate in social networks and to build social capital. This can lead to the experience of being part of a social structure and moreover to a feeling of security, build self-esteem, give bond to people, cultures and experiences and maintain group identity (*ibid*, p. 10-11). Likewise, Dekker & Bolt (2004) define place attachment as one of the elements of social cohesion.

Massey on producing identity of place - ‘a place called home’

Doreen Massey (1994) discusses the notions of “a place called home” and “sense of place” and stresses that the “identity of a place” is open, “unfixed” and continuously being produced (p. 169). So in her terms place-making would be a dynamic and continuous process by individuals interacting in a certain place. She questions place as a “source of belonging, identity and security” - it is “constructed out of movement, communication, social relations which always stretch beyond it” (pp. 170-171).

⁷ Other authors on place attachment: For example there is research by Hummon (1992) on “Community attachment” that can be conceptualized as “people’s feelings and beliefs about their place of residence” (Hummon 1992, p. 254). Milligan (1998) presents a theory of place attachment based on symbolic interactionism. In her work, place attachment is defined as “the emotional bond formed by an individual to a physical site due to the meaning given to the site through interactional processes” (p. 1).

“The singularity of any individual place is formed in part out of the specificity of the interactions which occur at that location (nowhere else does this precise mixture occur) and in part out of the fact that the meeting of those social relations at that location [...] will in turn produce new social effects.” (*ibid*, p. 167). So here meeting and interacting in place are considered defining elements. For Massey the identity of place is part of the positive interrelations with “elsewhere” and of the negative counter position with “the Other”. Places are “enclosures”, they have to have boundaries. Their identity “does not derive from some internalized history” but “from the specificity of its interactions with ‘the outside’” (*ibid*, p. 169).

Blokland - The ‘making of places’

According to Talja Blokland (2001) the built environment itself has no meaning but becomes a place by social action. In her article she focuses on class as place bound phenomenon and on how places acquire identities. If places are always articulations of social relations (see Massey 1994) then, Blokland concludes, places are being made in social interactions and thereby become (as opposed to ‘are’) sites that a certain group of people can identify with (Blokland 2001, p. 270).

People „make spatial structures into places not only as articulations of social relationships, but as vehicles that they use to create, renew and restructure such relationships” (*ibid*, p. 271). Here, place-making directly refers to the creation of social contacts and networks (what I refer to as connectedness, see below). “People can use the production of places for social identity formation” (*ibid*, p. 269).

According to Blokland attention should be paid to the collective, shared endeavor of place-making rather than only to the individual identity formation (*ibid*, p. 270). This applies to community garden projects where place-making becomes a shared endeavor. Blokland refers to the “symbolic appropriation of space” resulting in place-making in the discursive sense in the narratives and constructed history of the space (Blokland 2003; see also Milligan 1998). In this thesis I focus on both the symbolic place-making processes and the physical appropriation of space.

Appropriation of space and “open-source or situative urbanism”

Concerning the appropriation of space, it is important to mention the socio-spatial theories on urban transformation introduced in urbanism, urban geography, and urban sociology that have been important for urban renewal and different kinds of interventions in public space. Here, it is assumed that new possibilities of action arise under the conditions of de-regulation in the contemporary European city (Urban Catalyst 2007): Niches and free spaces for appropriation and “capacities of invention” (Lefébvre 1972).

The sociological theoretical background of “the appropriation of urban spaces” was analyzed by Obermaier (1980). She shows that urban design and planning creates possibilities of action. Concerning appropriation she introduces the concept of territoriality defined as “the possibility to control a certain piece of space, that is to direct what happens with it and which people will be accepted to it” (p. 70, translation by author).

The approaches on temporary use and spatial appropriation are often associated with the idea of “situative urbanism” (Ngo 2007). There is a lot of literature related to ‘situative’

interventions in public space and on temporary use projects (e.g. Raumlaborberlin 2008). The focus lies here on the practices of everyday life in urban space (de Certeau 1988). Here also the concept of „Enabling” in urban development has to be mentioned (Fezer & Heyden 2007). This notion of the activation of existing resources in spatial action by reducing inhibiting factors and ‘deformalizing’ can be related in particular to public space projects. The approach finds its contemporary adoption in the terms “Open Source - Urbanism” (Urban Catalyst 2007) that is connected to using the freedom arising from de-regulation. These theories have been taken up in participatory urban renewal approaches especially in projects for unused open spaces such as urban garden projects (ed. Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung 2007b).

The theories of Lefèvbre (1970/1991) on the social production of space are usually referred to in the discourse on the appropriation and collective use of public space as well as creative resistance/protest in urban space by grassroots movements. In the grassroots experiences of “lived space” there is a “third space” created beyond the “perceived space of everyday social life” and the “conceived space of cartographers, urban planners, or property speculators” (Shields 2004, p. 210). This “lived space” is a more symbolic space that includes alternative spatial practices. These theoretical approaches are important for different movements such as social grassroots, sub-culture and artists movements in European cities, including temporary use and squatting projects. These are „discourses of space and new modes of spatial praxis [...], who fashion a spatial presence and practice outside of the norms of the prevailing (enforced) social spatialization” (Shields 2004, p. 210). So the question arises whether this notion of “new modes of spatial praxis” is also notion for community garden projects. These ‘participatory urban actions’ have been defined as “allowing the re-appropriation and reinvention of public space through everyday life activities (gardening, cooking, chatting, reading, debating etc.), understood as creative practices in urban contexts.” (Petrescu, n.d., p. 4).

Feeling at home and meeting in place

To feel at home according to Blokland does not necessarily mean to be part or feel part of a neighborhood community (Blokland 2008b, p. 6). “To be actively involved and to identify is important to the experience of community but not for the art of feeling at home.” (*ibid*, p. 6, translation by author). Rather this feeling is connected to the everyday and sporadic meetings in the neighborhood. A meeting place is where people ‘bump into each other’, repeatedly and often times unintentionally until they might make an appointment to meet intentionally (Blokland 2008b). Repeated everyday encounters in public space create “publieke familiariteit” (public familiarity) which can be situated between the two dimensions of anonymous vs. intimate (concerning the provision of and access to information) and public vs. private access (*ibid*, p. 7).

Blokland in her conclusion questions the idea that the creation of meeting places goes along with generating liveability. Meeting can involve “short contacts” which have their own positive value and does not have to lead to the creation of lasting ties (“verknopen”) that create social networks and social capital (*ibid*, p. 28).

A different approach: the “placemakers”

There is another direction of approaches connected to the „placemaking“ movement (spelled like this), based on mostly North American ideas on place-making influenced by new urbanism, garden cities and other urban design ideas based on ‘community’ (Hunt 2001; Schneekloth & Shibley 1995). They also refer to J. Jakobs, W. Whyte, and other authors that deal with urban & public space design and the community development/‘designing community approach’. “Placemaking is the way in which all human beings transform places they find themselves into the places where they live” (Schneekloth & Shibley 1995, p. 5). The approach seems to be twofold: on the one hand a practical design endeavor to create “ideal places” and on the other hand a call for “placemakers” to “participate with others in our communities in thoughtful, careful responsible action.” (*ibid*, p. 5). There are several institutions in the USA such as “Partners for Livable Communities” and “Project for Public Spaces”, a nonprofit organization “dedicated to creating and sustaining public places that build communities” (Project for Public Spaces 2008). This and related organizations are hands-on institutions, that do commercial planning of public space and facilitation of community processes.

However, I use the concept of place-making as theoretical concept as opposed to this practical approach. Besides, I define it differently in the sense that in the centre of my analysis is the grassroots or community-driven perspective and the idea of appropriation of space & informal use of space.

To conclude, different theoretical and practical approaches to place-making have been presented which show that place-making is a complex and multi-dimensional concept that incorporates the following aspects (briefly summarized):

- places are created by their users through social interactions,
- place-making is a dynamic and continuous process, based on communication and social relations (Massey 1994),
- not only by individuals but also by groups interacting in a certain place, involving simultaneously individual, social, and cultural processes (“collectively shared attachment to place”, Low & Altman 1992),
- *emotional* attachment to a place, connected to knowledge and beliefs, as well as “behaviors and actions in reference to a place” (Low & Altman 1992),
- not only to the place but also to the experiences, social relations and practices happening in place,
- the symbolic or physical appropriation of space,
- the concept of “parochialization” and social territory (based on Lofland 1998),
- feeling of belonging and home,
- the *activity* aspect of ‘making’ and active creation,
- place-making as grassroots endeavor of appropriation and informal use of space (based on everyday practices) connected to ‘enabling’ spatial practices (“situative”) and the “social production of space” (Lefèbvre 1970/1991),
- ‘placemaking’ in urban and public space design for liveability in neighborhoods (practice based and ‘top-down’),
- social meeting in place in terms of encounter of the “Other” in a public domain (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001) or public realm (Lofland 1998)

2.3.3 The social perspective – on the concept of social connectedness

The central role of social interactions and connectedness for community garden projects and with regards to place and place-making has become clear in the previous chapters. There are many concepts linked to social connectedness such as social cohesion, empowerment, social sustainability, and social enablement. As I stated before, I focus on the social contacts, networks and resources created in community garden projects. Thereby the concept of bonding and bridging social capital is one important theoretical reference (Putnam 2000).

The concept of social capital

The concept of social capital is seen as relevant for participation and civic engagement (Mayer 2005) and it is a crucial concept for the analysis of community gardens. Social capital is used, accessed and produced in community garden projects according to Glover (2004) and other authors. I do not want to focus on the internal workings and external effects of social capital; that has been done by other authors (Blokland 2008a, Glover 2004).

Bourdieu defines social capital as „the aggregate of actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition - or in other words, to membership in a group which - provides each of its members with the backing of collectively-owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word.” (Bourdieu, 1986, pp. 248-249). He focuses on institutions (that can be families, clubs, associations, parties etc.) that produce occasions, places or practices that bring individuals together “as homogeneous as possible” in all respects (p. 250). Here, homogeneity and bonding social capital is stressed.

According to Putnam (2000) the main idea of social capital theory is that social networks have a value and that individuals are most productive when they are connected to a dense network of social relations. His definition of social capital “refers to connections among individuals - social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (Putnam 2000, p. 19).

Social capital is an aspect of a social structure that facilitates certain actions of individuals (see Glover 2004), depending on the individuals’ capacity to make direct and indirect connections with others. Individuals „have limited resources themselves”, so they access „other resources through their direct and indirect social ties, which they use (social capital) for purposive actions” (Glover 2004, p. 146).

Social capital is both an individual and collective asset. Social capital can have “externalities” which means there is a “spill over benefit” from other people being connected and living in a well connected community (Putnam 2000, p. 20). “With Putnam the category gains an additional dimension, that the community as a whole stands to gain, in economic as well as civic and democratic terms”, from the presence of social capital (Mayer 2003, p. 112).

Forms of social capital - bridging and bonding

The most important dimensions to distinguish social capital (according to Putnam 2000) are bridging and bonding, which both have powerful social effects. Bonding social capital (within group, “exclusive”) means the strong relations between people in similar situations which can create strong in-group loyalty but can be excluding to ‘out-groups’. Bridging

social capital (between groups, “inclusive”) is directed more outward looking networks with people across social cleavages (in terms of social ‘class’ or also ethnic cultures) (Putnam 2000, p. 22). It creates access to external assets and information and therefore is important for “getting ahead” (Putnam 2000, p. 23). The related concept of “linking social capital” (Woolcock, 1998 in Glover 2004) refers to links created with people outside of the community.

There are strong arguments that associations should be balanced concerning bridging and bonding capital (Putnam 2000). “Associations that bridge various social groups through overlapping memberships and contacts are seemingly much better at sustaining a liberal-democratic polity” (Akkerman et al. 2004, p.91). So there is an argument that project groups should be socially mixed in order to incorporate bridging. This research tried to incorporate the issue of social mix in the research design (case selection see Chapter 3.3) and in the empirical analysis.

Although social capital is always seen as productive and positive, it has to be considered that the access to social capital is different, depending on the position in a social network (see Putnam 2000). That means that there is an inherent unequal distribution in the notion of social capital. Some people depending on their individual ability and their social position (class, ethnicity, gender) have more access to social capital than others.

So, the differentiation of the use of and access to social capital in community gardens is important. Social capital is used to create a community garden; it is accessed by the members and also created within/by the project.

Beyond social capital

Social capital is conceptualized as “social favor bank” that can be used as capital to facilitate purposive actions such as helping a neighbor carrying a piece of furniture or by borrowing a tool (Putnam, 2000, p. 20). People act solidary in order to produce “useful relationships that can secure material or symbolic profits” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 249), although this might not be consciously done. Social-psychologically speaking this is an instrumentalist perspective on social relationships that does not see other factors important in relations but their function for gaining profit. Relationships are seen as “products of investment strategies” which are “convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 249 & 243).

The definition by Putnam converts the social concept into an economic capital and “social relations into context independent causal relations” according to Mayer (2003, p. 112). Moreover, Mayer sees “blind spots and problematic consequences following from the ambiguities of the ‘social capital’ concept” (*ibid*, p. 111). One main point is that “by prioritizing specific forms of civic engagement (while neglecting others), it filters the contemporary reconfigurations in the relationship of civil society, state and market in a peculiar way, which is conducive to supporting the spread of market forces in areas so far beyond the reach of capital” (*ibid*, p. 111).

Besides, different types of voluntary associations are not differentiated by their specific goals and contexts but seen as comparable in their production of social capital. Thereby, social capital is presumed to be independent from context (Mayer 2003, p. 117). This goes along with the Bloklands’ critique and her approach to “spatially organized social capital” which is bound to local contexts (Blokland 2008a, p. 147).

According to Mayer, the concept is normatively charged and narrowed down to denoting “attitudes and habits conducive to civic engagement” which is a kind of social capital that can be “enhanced or regenerated by state intervention” (Mayer 2003, p. 112). Such an argumentation can be found in Akkerman et al. (2004). The authors argue that “an interactive state” can foster bridging capital by creating “overlapping networks” that have an important integrative function (Akkerman et al. 2004, p. 91).

Mayer (2003) states that “particular groups of urban activism” are not included in the social capital conceptualization, such as “adversarial movements and protest mobilizations” (p. 117). Contemporary forms of civic engagement and new types of urban activism and movements involving protest should be incorporated in the discourse. Those are resulting from “contemporary economic and political restructuring processes and newly emerging relationships between civil society, social movements and the state” (*ibid*, p. 117). This concept of “new forms of civic engagement” I have included in my analysis (see Chapter 4.5.1).

To conclude, social capital is the most important theoretical concept to take into account for the investigation of the creation of social connectedness in community gardens. It is well elaborated and has a strong research base. However, with regards to the controversial discussion on social capital and critiques presented, I use the broader concept of *social connectedness* in my work. This concept incorporates the creation, access and use of social resources and networks as well as bonding and bridging social capital. This is according to Glover (2004) who has shown that community gardens are “both a consequence and a source of social capital” (p. 156). A conceptualization should also take into account that social connectedness is place bound. As Mayer has shown localness is important and the concept cannot be seen without the socio-political and place context. Concerning urban quality “spatially organized social capital is expected to enhance the liveability of neighbourhoods” (Blokland 2008a, p. 147).

2.4 Conclusion

The brief overview of the research and theoretical literature shows that there is variety of authors from different disciplines writing about place, the attachment to place and place-making. The main approaches stem from environmental psychology, social psychology and urban sociology but also other disciplines like urbanism, architecture, anthropology and human geography have been involved in studying the “sense of place” (Hummon 1992, p. 253). However, the term ‘place-making’ has so far not been systematically theoretically defined as far as I could investigate.

In summary, the place perspective is crucial for the analysis of community gardens as public urban spaces. Space ‘becomes place’ through the meanings ascribed to them and through the actions and social relations that take place here. If places are seen as articulations of relations, the community gardens as sites of relationships „cannot be treated merely as context” (Blokland 2001) but have to be investigated as meaningful places.

The meanings those places have to the people who create and use them and the feelings of belonging they connect to them, lead to the concept of place-making. Place-making is a complex and multi-dimensional concept; its different theoretical elements have been

presented. My conceptualization incorporates the feeling of attachment to a place and the action of appropriation at the same time. Here I include the notion of meeting places and the concept of “parochial realm territories” (Lofland 1998) which reveals that public space is not a neutral meeting place for everyone but is appropriated by certain groups. My conceptualization incorporates individual as well as collective endeavors in place making. All the aspects of place-making are usually linked to urban quality and liveability

Concerning urban place quality the theoretical analysis implies that the concepts of place-making and social connectedness both can be seen as constituencies and constituents of the (social and physical) place quality in the neighborhood. This refers to the theoretical research question on how place-making and social connectedness relate to urban place quality (see Chapter 3). The presented theories imply that place-making processes and/or social connectedness affect place quality and liveability. At the same time place quality can be constituent for place-making processes and social connectedness. Thereby, all three concepts are interrelated. This question, though not in the centre of my research, will be investigated in this thesis.

Social connectedness has been discussed theoretically with regards to social capital. The concept is widely used in research but has been criticized by various authors. I therefore focus the broader concept of social connectedness in this thesis which refers to the creation, access and use of social resources and networks as well as bonding and bridging social capital.

This thesis is an empirical field research based on the methodology of Grounded Theory (see Chapter 3) which means that it approaches the field with conceptual ideas but strives to be open to other and new concepts. Thereby, the existing theories are just to be seen as a basis for the empirical research, as presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

The aim of this chapter is to explain the research design, the case selection including the case descriptions, the methodology of data collection and analysis as well as the quality assessment for the methodological approach.

3.1 Main derived research questions

For the research approach I chose to investigate two cases in depth with several research questions (as opposed to investigating many cases with one question). Based on the aims of this study, on the main research questions (see Chapter 1), the conceptual framework and theory (Chapter 2), I have derived the following questions to be investigated.

Empirical research questions:

- a. How do the organizers, participants, and surrounding neighbors *perceive* the community gardens? What are the *meanings* of the gardens to the people? What are the benefits and values (ideas/ideologies, personal importance, feelings etc.) connected to them? What “moves” the people to get involved?
- b. Can the different conceptual aspects of community garden projects be observed? Which concepts do the meanings and perceptions connect to?
 - *Community & Social connectedness*: What kinds of social ties do exist? What can be found out about the access, use and creation of social resources and networks? What kind of quality do the created contacts reveal and is there a sense of togetherness? Is there bridging social capital as access to (social, economic, political) resources? Social inclusion & socio-cultural mix: Is there integration taking place, as basis for bridging social capital? Who is integrated, who is not?
 - *Joint activities and self-organization*: What kind of joint activities exist and are they important features of the project? How much is based on self-organization and do people benefit from self-organizing?
 - *Place quality*: In the perception of participants/organizers and neighbors - What is the existing place quality in the *neighborhood*? Is place quality created? Do not only the project participants but also the surrounding neighbors and visitors from outside benefit from the community gardens?
 - Are there *other themes/concepts* and important factors concerning the community garden projects according to the perception of organizers/ participants and neighbors? (to be discovered in research process e.g. ideology, access to nature and greenery, gardening as activity)
 - What role does the voluntary engagement play in the sense that community gardeners fulfill public tasks without compensation? What can be found out about “*new forms of civic engagement*” (Mayer 2003)?
- c. Are there processes of place-making involved in the community garden projects? Is there a feeling of home and sense of belonging to the place created?

- Which perceived (physical and social) qualities do the organizers, participants and users/neighbors connect to the place?
- Appropriation of space: How is the place used by different groups? Is there ownership of public space created and a place with certain meanings and intentions?
- Meeting place: Are different groups formed who meet and use the space in their way? How and why do they meet?
- d. Do organizers, participants, and surrounding neighbors *differ* in their understandings of the community garden projects, if so how and why?
- e. What are the lessons learned concerning the project organization and practical implementation?
 - How are the projects organized and how does this connect to the empirical concept findings? Are the projects creating an environment for place-making?
 - What are the implications for citizen involvement in public space in general?

Based on these main research questions a pool of questions was developed as a basis for the empirical research (see Appendix A).

Theoretical questions:

- How can place-making be defined as concept empirically and theoretically?
- How are place-making, social connectedness and the other presented concepts related empirically? How are place-making and social connectedness related to urban place quality?

3.2 Description of research design

My research design is characterized by a qualitative empirical research approach. The collection of qualitative data and the qualitative analysis are based on *Grounded Theory* methodology (Glaser & Strauss 1967). Likewise, this research follows an *inductive-deductive approach* (Flick 2002), i.e. the concepts were developed from theory and from empirical data. Theoretical propositions in form of a conceptual framework were developed prior to the data collection (deductive approach). However, the research was always open for new concepts and new categories were introduced according to the empirical findings during the analysis of the data (inductive approach).

I have chosen a *case study design* investigating two projects, one in Rotterdam and one in Berlin. *Focus and units of analysis:* The internal, social processes of community garden projects were assessed by interviews, participant observation, and ethnographical film research.

The research design deployed multiple units of analysis (Yin 1991):

1. *Individual perceptions*, opinions, and subjective experiences of:
 - a) project participants and project organizers
 - b) non-participants (surrounding neighbors) *The researchers own perceptions*
2. *Observable behavior and events* (embedded in the contextual conditions and the local culture)

3.3 Case selection and case description

After reviewing and visiting many different community garden projects in order to get an overview on different projects, typologies and general approaches to green spaces in both cities, I have selected the two case study projects presented below. The selection of the projects and the respondents were following the conceptual approach, that is, “theoretical sampling” was used (Glaser & Strauss 1967). The criteria for the case selection were that the garden projects had to reveal the central aspects of community gardens presented above and the communities should have similar attributes. They had to be collective gardens (not individual) with at least semi-public or public access. The community of gardeners had to be mixed in social (class) and/or ethnical cultures, life styles and/or age of its members (i.e. not just a group of friends gardening together). The projects had to reveal a minimum size (at least 6 participants). They had to be geographically connected to an urban neighborhood which should not be a completely homogeneous middle-class area.

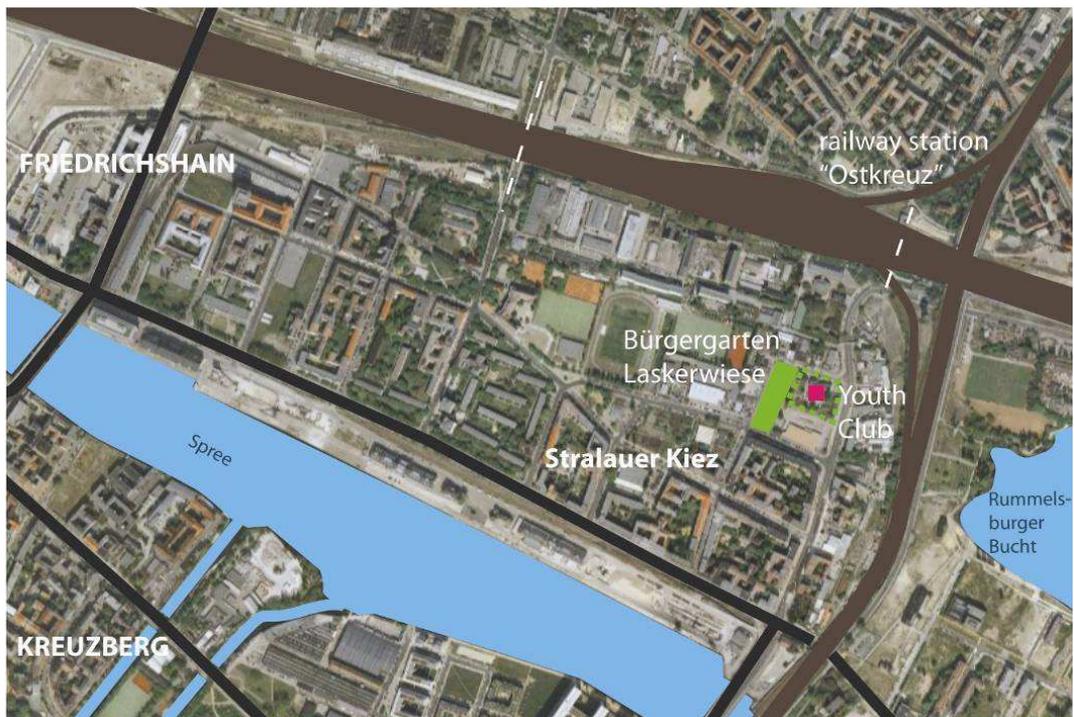
3.3.1 Case study project “Bürgergarten Laskerwiese” in Berlin

The first case study project is the ‘citizen garden’ or “Bürgergarten Laskerwiese” located in Friedrichshain, a central district of Berlin. The neighborhood where the garden is situated is called “Stralauer Kiez”.

The neighborhood “Stralauer Kiez”

The neighborhood has the character of an island located between railway tracks (in the North and East) and major traffic routes (in the South and West). Thereby it is strangely cut off from the rest of the city and has little connections with the surrounding neighborhoods. The ward is characterized by residential blocks, mostly socialist concrete block type (“Plattenbauten”), unused wasteland, and small industries.

Figure 4: Map on location of the Bürgergarten Laskerwiese in the neighborhood



Today the neighborhood has around 6.000 inhabitants. In the last 20 years, many people had moved away and the number had been down to 5.800 when local industries closed in the 1990s and thousands of workplaces were lost. Today the neighborhood is being upgraded and has improved socio-economically. The “Urban II” program (European Union) starting in the year 2000 until 2008 has fostered the revitalization process (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung 2007a).

Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg is the densest district of Berlin with the lowest available household income per capita (average 1175 Euro per month, source: Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg 2006). The ward has a relatively low number of 12,6% foreigners.

Due to its location and features the neighborhood is clearly defined, “it is nice and overseeable, people know each other that is an advantage” (Sabine, Organizer /Berlin).

Community involvement has been low in the years of reconstruction of the neighborhood after the reunification of Germany in 1989, despite the traditions of GDR neighborhood values. Neighborhood participation was fostered in the recent years by the locally active institutions and the politically left district government (the Green Party). According to the community organizations members, there are good local institutional networks that organize together with residents to develop the neighborhood (“Kiezzrunde”). There are very few community spaces in the neighborhood. There is only one small green square (“Rudolfplatz”) and few social meeting points such as cafés and bars, besides a cultural and neighborhood center.

The “Bürgergarten Laskerwiese” community garden project

The project consists of the citizen park with a garden revealing all characteristics of a community garden. The project, which is also called “intercultural garden”, started in 2006 and the development process took 5 years.

The park has a total area of 3.500 sqm. It consists of a gardening area with 35 small individual patches (10 sqm each). In addition, it has common areas with a pond, a hut and equipment shelter, compost etc. and a ball playing field (separate and fenced off).

The site of the park is interesting itself since it was a “lost space” before. It is located between a chain supermarket and a car dealer, next to concrete housing blocks in a quite scattered and abandoned surrounding environment behind a local railway station.

Figure 5: Bürgergarten Laskerwiese from above



The garden project is completely public but fenced off. The two gates are open day and night. There is a connection to the youth club and vocational training center next to it. The employees from there also help in the garden and the gardeners go to the café for lunch.

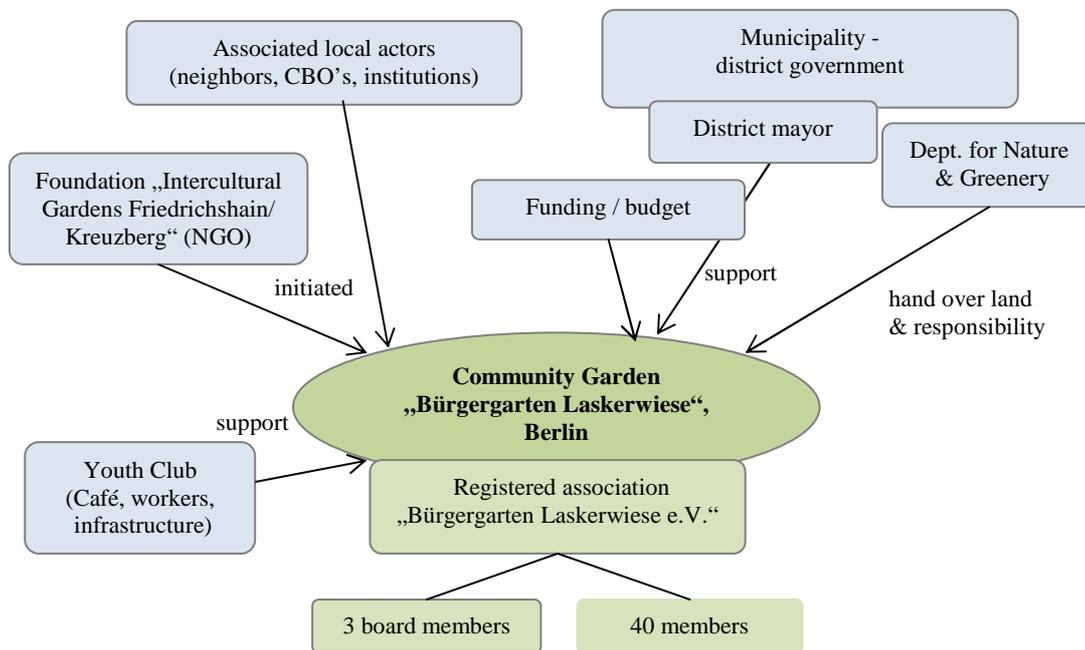
The garden is formally run and managed by an association “Bürgergarten Laskerwiese e.V.” with 40 members. There is a board that takes the role of the organizers and involves two professional gardeners who helped to build and design the garden. *„We call ourselves “Verein” and we are a community of interest. We have our little gardens here and pay 10 Euro membership fee per year for that.”* (Henner Participant / Berlin). Most people have their own garden plot, also as groups or families, and take care of the common areas.

The project was initiated by various local institutions and resident representatives. The main initiators were the Youth Club and the foundation “Intercultural Gardens Friedrichshain/Kreuzberg”. Various joint planning workshops took place together with the municipality. The land was provided by the local government, so has most of the funding

(main budget 158.000 € from selling a part of the land to a supermarket chain, plus Urban II funds 11.800 €, plus 4.000 € from the NGO “Aktion Mensch”).

The interesting organizational aspect is that there is a partnership between the citizen and the municipality to maintain, manage and design a park on their own, including legal and budget responsibilities. The gardeners had to form an association with legal status and make a formal contract. They receive the budget from the municipality upon request and can decide to a great extent on the use. The registered association is self-organized and completely responsible for the operation and maintenance of the park. The project has strong political support and became a pilot project for the district to experiment with the involvement of citizen in public greenery.

Figure 6: Organizational map of “Bürgergarten Laskerwiese”, Berlin

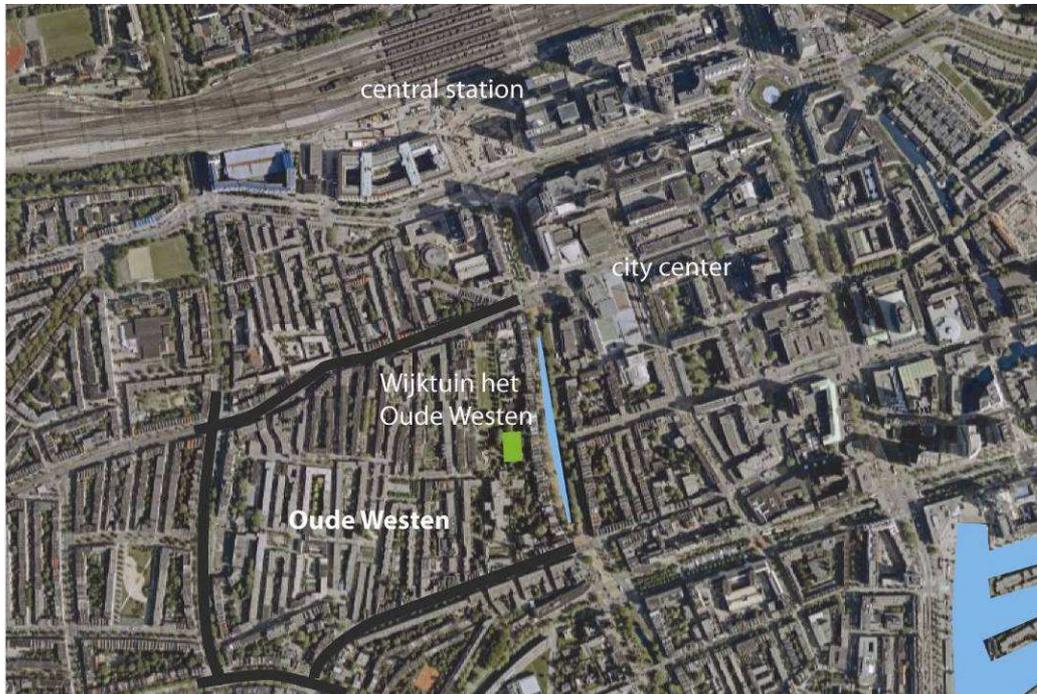


The project group is characterized by a social and age mix (participants ranging from 12-76 years, most are between 28 and 42 years). They are academics, students, local working class, unemployed, self-employed, and formally employed, East and West Germans, foreigners. Direct neighbors are involved as well as people who live farther away. The garden and park is used not only by the gardeners but also by different user groups such as dog owners, people who use the sports field for football, basketball and BMX biking, or people who come to sit on the benches and grass.

3.3.2 Case study project “Wijktuin het Oude Westen” in Rotterdam

The second case study project is the community garden “Wijktuin het Oude Westen”. It is located in Rotterdam city centre district in the neighborhood of “Oude Westen”.

Figure 7: Map with location in the city centre of Rotterdam



The neighborhood “Oude Westen”

Het Oude Westen is a lively and multi-cultural inner city neighborhood with 9.500 inhabitants, located very close to the central business district and main shopping areas of the city. The “wijk” meaning neighborhood or ward belongs to the district government of “Centrumraad”.

The neighborhood is characterized by typical pre-war three storey houses and a lot of social housing from the 70s and 80s. The population is comprised of 73% foreigners (Centrum voor Onderzoek en Statistiek 2008), mainly Moroccans, Turks, Surinamese, Cape Verdians, South European, and Chinese. Many migrants arrive at the neighborhood and stay for a few years before moving on, but there are also people that have been living in the ward for decades.

“I like about this neighborhood that not one group is the majority. Here the tolerance is big, people get along. This is the melting pot of the world and I like it.” (Natalie 00:26)

The percentage of lower income people (lower 40% income group) in the ward is 64% of the population. Thereby it is among the lowest in the city and 28% live below poverty line (Centrum voor Onderzoek en Statistiek 2008a). The percentage of unemployed persons out of the working population is 13% (Centrum voor Onderzoek en Statistiek 2008b).

There are considerable problems with drugs and related crime but also there is a remarkably active civil society. The neighborhood has a long history of citizen involvement in public space. The Dutch organizers tell that it is as a common attitude in the neighborhood to get involved, to be organized and to be critical.

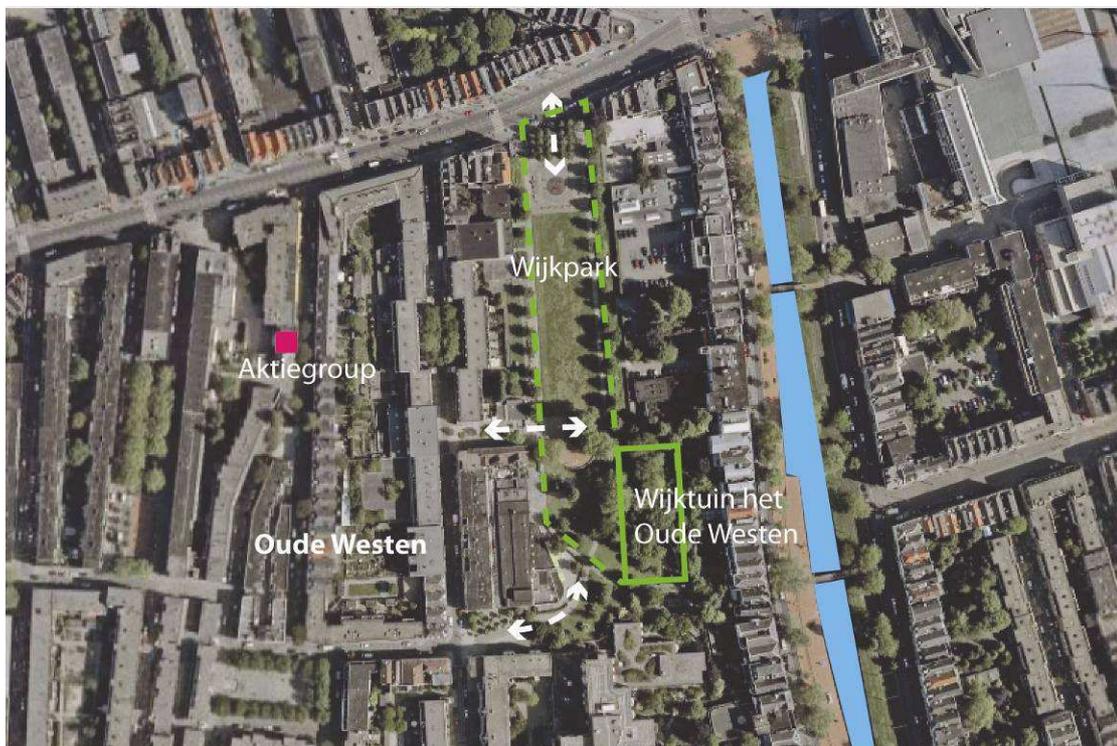
“In this neighborhood, the more difficulties there are, the more people are involved. ‘We live here - if we don’t do anything, nobody will.’ This is special in this neighborhood. That is why I love working and living here.” (Natalie, Organizer / Rotterdam)

In the Rotterdam urban “social index” gives the ward a rating of 5,3 out of 6, evaluating capacities (low score), living environment, participation (high), and social bonding (high). According to these figures there is a high social quality (Gemeente Rotterdam 2008, p.16).

Most neighborhood activities are based at the „Aktiegroep het Oude Westen“. This neighborhood association is engaged since 1970 in activities and projects for livability in the neighborhood (Diemont & Vos 2004). The association took also the most active part in starting the urban renewal process in the 70s. They created the Wijkpark in the 1980s together with a broad alliance of residents and local institutions. Under the same roof there is the community building unit “Opbouwwerk” of the ward which is undertaken by the private organization SONOR. They formally manage all projects and volunteer activities, including the park and community garden.

The other local actors concerned are the district government (“Centrumraad”), especially the local district delegate (“Stadsmarinier”), the department for urban space maintenance (“Gemeentewerk”) responsible for the park, the neighborhood institutions as well as the “Woonstad Rotterdam”. The latter is a housing corporation, a powerful actor in the neighborhood, a great part of the housing stock.

Figure 8: Map locating the garden project in the neighborhood



The community garden “Wijktuin het Oude Westen”

The neighborhood garden is situated in the back of a public park “Wijkpark het Oude Westen”. It was founded in 1992.

It was initiated by the neighborhood organization “Aktiegroep” together with motivated individual residents. It is managed and supervised by the community building organization “Opbouwwerk”. Thereby the garden project is not entirely self-organized. There is a full-time employee in a welfare-to-work programme („ID-baan“) who maintains the garden.

Figure 9: Wijktuin het Oude Westen, the weekly tea terrace

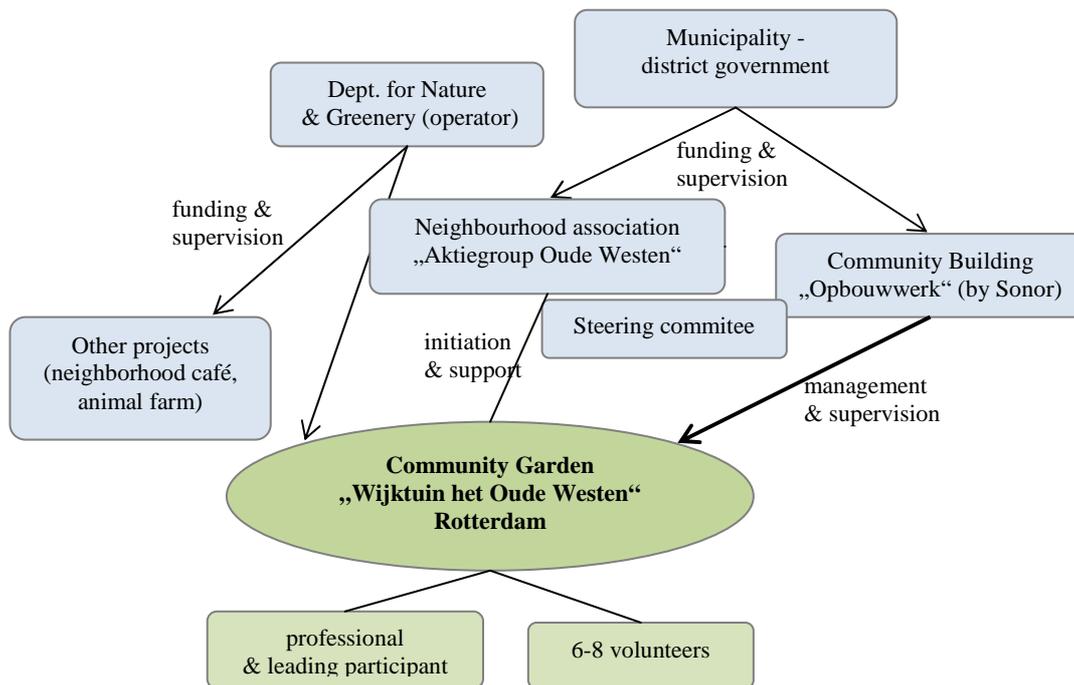


The garden is semi-public in access. It is fenced off and has opening hours. It has a small pond and a hut with equipment. There are different patches that are taken care of collectively by the members of the project who call themselves ‘volunteers’. The project is closely connected to other facilities in the parks managed by volunteers such as the community centers and a small animal farm (Aktiegroep het Oude Westen 1993).

The garden has around 6-8 active participants and one paid garden worker who is present every weekday. The project group is moderately socially mixed and multi-cultural. The group consists of mostly women aged 40 to 79. It is perceived by many neighbors as a project for older people, a fact that also shows that the group is rather homogenous. However, taking a closer look, they are people with diverse backgrounds (also migrants) and lifestyles and not classical white middle class. Most participants have no permanent job and some have been sent through rehabilitation programs (“physical or psychological problems”).

There are more volunteers that come only during the summer months and organize the weekly “tea terrace”. The garden is open for the public 5 days per week for 2 hours when people from the surrounding workplace go there to have lunch. There are educational projects in cooperation with local schools taking place in the garden, organized by the leading participant.

Figure 10: Organizational map of community garden “Wijktuin het Oude Westen”



To conclude, concerning the local neighborhood which the case study projects are connected to, both neighborhoods are mixed (socially or ethnically) and characterized by low income conditions. The Berlin neighborhood “Stralauer Kiez”, in comparison, is less social bonding and is a less multi-cultural place than the ward ‘Oude Westen’. Concerning the existing political and participatory culture and local institutions actors they both have a variety of local actors and engaged citizen that are involved in neighborhood issues. The projects both are supported by the local government. In Rotterdam the project is managed by a mediating institution (Opbouwwerk) and in Berlin the project is entirely self-organized in partnership with the municipality. The Berlin project is bigger and the project group is more heterogeneous (see also Chapter 4.5 on findings about differences between the projects). Notwithstanding, the case study projects have comparable characteristics as community gardens.

3.4 Research process and data collection

The research design consists of two study projects and three respondent groups: the organizers and participants of the community garden project as well as ‘non-participants’ which are the surrounding neighbors. It has to be differentiated between ‘regular’ participants and ‘leading participants’ who have an organizing function in both project investigated (not to be confused the official organizers that are the initiators or affiliated institutional workers). In both cases there is also one participant who is a paid professional.

Table 2: Research design

	Berlin “Bürgergarten”	Rotterdam ”Wijk tuin”	Total
	Case 1	Case 2	
Organizers	Interviews 2	Interviews 1	3
Participants	Interviews 8 (incl. 1 leading, 1 prof.)	Interviews 8 (incl. 1 leading, 1 prof.)	16
Neighbors	Questionnaires 15	Questionnaires 15	30

The data collection is characterized by a *triangulation* of multiple data sources:

- Primary data:
 - Semi-structured in-depth interviews with project participants and organizers, with guideline, recorded on digital video.
 - Questionnaires with surrounding neighbors (standardized, structured, open and closed questions).
 - Participant observation in the field (participating, open, non-standardized, ethnographic), ethnographical field notes and recording on digital video.
- Secondary data:
 - Literature review, media review (selected project materials, articles and films on gardening projects), expert opinions (conversations partially transcribed).

Interviews and questionnaires

The interview technique can be characterized as semi-structured in-depth interview with elements of ethnographical interviews. In most cases I chose an explicit interview situation with sound and video recording. In addition, I also conducted spontaneous interviews. The interviews had a duration of about 1-1,5 hours. They were held in the community garden outdoors and, in a few cases, at the homes or work places of the respondents.

In the semi-structured interviews I used a guideline (see Appendix A) with a pool of 130 questions (the same for participants and organizers in both projects). The guideline consisted only in open questions that were aimed getting close to the stories, meanings, perceptions, and values that are connected to the gardening projects. I used the drawing of a social map and the conversation about it as one interview technique.

Figure 11: Interview situation with film recording in Bürgergarten Laskerwiese, Berlin



The survey questionnaire consisted of 35 open and closed questions and had a duration of 10-20 minutes. The questioning took place spontaneously going door to door or in public space in the park, in front of the houses or the supermarket. Thereby, in each case 10 neighbors and 5 park or garden users (non-participants, in some cases not neighbors) were asked (purposive sampling). The neighbors were sampled from the surrounding housing blocks; attention was paid to include a variety of different social groups and diverse housing types with different income groups connected to that. As an incentive a flower pot was given to each respondent after the interviews.

For the field work in Rotterdam an interpreter (student helper) was present. The questionnaire was translated into Dutch and German. All answers were translated back into English.

In Rotterdam it was problematic to find respondents who were neighbors and knew the garden. According to the project participants and organizers in this neighborhood very few people know the garden. So I had to change the strategy: we asked the respondents when they did not know the garden some basic questions from a short questionnaire. Thereby, I documented that we at least talked to 30 additional people. Finally, we managed to find 13 people who know something about the garden and answered our questions.

Observation

As an important data source to accompany the information gained from the interviews, the researcher's own perceptions were "recorded" in ethnographical field notes. In addition, the settings, people and events were recorded on digital video.

Methodologically my observation technique was qualitative and participating; it was a "systematically hanging out" and sometimes semi-structured (e.g. when observing a certain event). In the field I stayed outside the action as researcher and the purpose of my presence in the field was absolutely clear (Lamnek 1993). The observation data is not systematically analyzed in this study but deployed to accompany and validate the analysis of the interview data (Lüdtke 1992). It adds information on the settings, characteristics of participants, actions, verbal and nonverbal content, functions of interactions etc.

Film as research method

Ethnographical film research was used as research method, and audio-visual technology (digital video) was deployed to record all the data collected (see Shrum, Duque & Brown 2005). Thereby a comprehensive documentation of the research subjects, the situations and places could be ensured. The research process was documented and can thereby be followed up upon and reproduced (reliability). The reviewing and editing of the film material was also valuable as a second data analysis step (see Chapter 3.5).

This research technique also implies that research is not remaining in the academic community but is “given back” to the people in the field. The collection of audio-visual data enabled the editing of the material for a final documentation, which is targeted towards a broader non-academic and practice based public.

3.5 Data analysis

Overview on data collected

The data analysis is based on multiple sources of data: the in-depth interviews participants and organizers, the questionnaire with surrounding neighbors, observation field notes, and non-recorded informal conversations.

The results of the data collection for the Berlin case study project:

The main data set are 8 in-depth interviews with project participants (1 professional, 1 leading participant) and 2 with organizers. These 10 interviews were recorded on digital sound and video. The respondents are 5 male, 5 female with an average age of 43 years ranging from 12 to 76 years. In addition, 4 short interviews with other participants were conducted (15-20 minutes each). Since I had many participants whom I talked to informally during my field visits I made an additional short questionnaire (Overview all Interviews, see Appendix C).

The second data set for Berlin consists of 15 survey interviews with surrounding neighbors. These can be divided in 10 neighbors who were asked on the street and in front of close-by supermarket and 5 garden/park users. The respondents are 6 male, 9 female with an average age of 30.8 years ranging from 13 to 57 years (Overview all surveys, see Appendix C).

The results of the data collection for the Rotterdam case study project:

The bases for analysis are 8 in-depth interviews with project participants (1 professional, 1 leading participant) and with 1 organizer. I did not do additional short interviews since I almost interviewed all project participants available. The respondents are 8 female, 1 male with an average age of 49,6 years ranging from 30 to 79 years (Overview all Interviews, see Appendix C).

In addition the data for the surrounding neighbors consists of 13 full questionnaires and additional 30 short surveys with surrounding neighbors and park/garden users who were mostly not familiar with the community garden. Male and female respondents were balanced the average age was 44.2 years (Overview all surveys, see Appendix C).

For all the in-depth interviews full transcriptions and analytical observation protocols were prepared. So the analysis was based on verbal/transcribed data and on the film material. All

questionnaires were put into a data base and translated from Dutch/German into English. The audio-visual material was edited in a film document and thereby selected data is available on DVD in the Appendix of this thesis.

Data analysis process

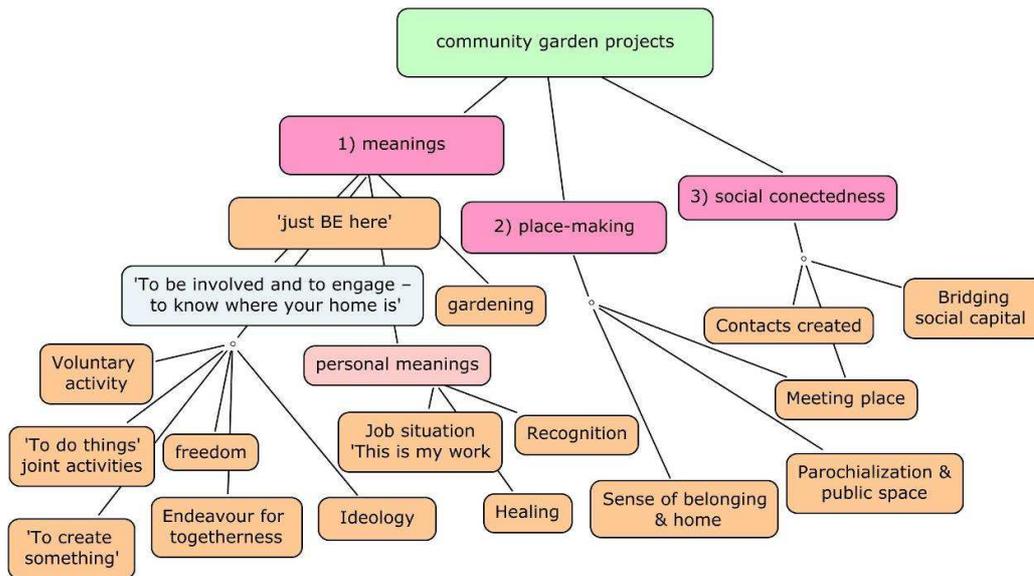
The data analysis method has been qualitative and interpretative, that is, based on the interpretation of the meanings and functions of behavior and verbal data. The data analysis approach has been tailored to the type of data and to the research questions. I did not follow one method of analysis but deployed various elements that are derived from different data analysis methods which are based on Grounded Theory. Thereby a triangulation of multiple data analysis method was achieved.

The data (interviews, observation protocols, field notes, questionnaires) was analyzed by qualitative coding and categorizing. An ex-ante coding scheme was developed on the basis of the conceptual framework and research questions (see Appendix E). The coding process was open to new and relevant concepts from the data. Consequently, I have revised and modified the coding scheme constantly by unbundling and combining categories, specifying and refining them until I finished going through all the interviews and questionnaires. I ended up with an *analysis category scheme* of 65 categories grouped into main concepts.

The analysis of the survey data on the surrounding neighbors' perception was made with the same coding scheme. Due to the small number of questionnaires a statistic analysis was not appropriate. A frequency analysis was done when complete item answers were provided.

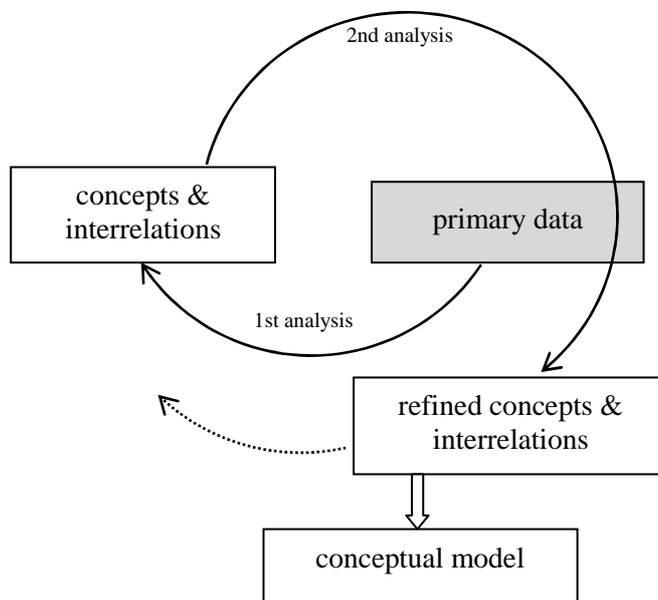
After the coding of all data, next analytical step consisted inserting all coded text quotes and observation notes in an Excel data base. Then the categories were analyzed each horizontally across all respondents from both projects (i.e. category or concept based analysis). Then I systematically looked at variations between both case study projects concerning all categories as well as at differences between individual participants. In the last step I analyzed the difference between the respondent groups: participants vs. organizers vs. neighbors. This approach is derived from the "constant comparative method", which is a general approach to theory development looking at differences and variations (Glaser & Strauss 1967). The result was a differentiated scheme of all identified categories that can be grouped under key categories as shown in the category tree (see Figure 12).

Figure 12: Category-tree



The next analytical step consisted in refining these categories conceptually and looking at their interrelations. Here it was useful to go back to the primary data (within the editing process), reviewing all main data material in a second analysis concerning the main categories (in a ‘circular process’, see Figure 13).

Figure 13: Circular analysis scheme



This iterative process resulted in a theoretical model around main concepts which was constantly tested against individual respondent types and across case study projects. For example, I found after careful revision that the category “Search for togetherness and community” was actually proving to be a main concept combining various other categories. Or I unbundled categories and discovered new concepts such as the “Freedom – to do what you like and to leave”. The resulting concepts and their relationships are presented in the conceptual model in Chapter 4.

This method of verifying hypotheses about the categories and their interrelationships by constant “revision and reformulation” (Steinke 1999, p. 70) shows the process aspect of grounded theory development (Strauss & Corbin 1996). The inductive approach of developing a theory goes together with a deductive going back from the theory to the data for validation (“inductive-deductive approach”).

3.6 Conclusion - reflection on methodology

Research design, case selection, data collection and analysis

The research design proved to be viable and data collection went very smoothly. There were minor difficulties in finding appropriate respondents for the survey in Rotterdam. This fact was overcome as described and included in the data analysis.

Concerning the data analysis it should be mentioned that the individual social maps were included in the analysis for each respondent and reviewed across each case study project. Differences in perceptions but also in the social network types became clear. These were analyzed according to the four network types presented in the coding scheme (see Appendix E). However, these did not prove to be very useful in terms of distinguishing between the respondents. Finally, I did not include the personal social connectedness in my final analysis since my focus was on the main question of perceptions and meanings of the community garden projects. Notwithstanding, the social maps proved to be a very useful interview tool to talk about the personal involvement and the role of the project for each individual. This data is used extensively in the analysis.

Discussion on the quality of data - reliability and validity

The traditional understanding of objectivity and reliability in terms of strict replicability is not appropriate for this kind of qualitative research. That means the methods used will not lead to the same results in another situation with another researcher as they are context specific and the analysis is interpretative (see Flick 2002, p. 319).

Central for *reliability* in the sense of qualitative research are the following aspects:

- Use of scientific qualitative research methods and their standards. The research approach was based on Grounded Theory and involving most techniques of data analysis and theory development applying the respective criteria of quality assessment.⁸
- Detailed description of the research stages so the research process can be followed and reproduced. I used a “research diary” in order to document the process, the events, field visits, interviews, conversations etc. Moreover, all research sessions of data collection were recorded on video. This could ensure transparency as well as a reflection on role of the researcher in the research process. Nevertheless, the interpretative approach to the analysis and the development of the conceptual model

⁸ This is based on the criteria for the assessment and applicability of Grounded Theories by Glaser & Strauss (1967) and the criteria for Grounded Theory development by Steinke (1999) based on Strauss & Corbin (1996).

can be criticized like all Grounded Theory based research as being subjectively based on the researcher's interpretation.

- With a complete documentation of the analysis process it is made explicit and transparent, how I got from the data to the results. I used "Memos" (Strauss & Corbin 1996) and especially diagrams in the data analysis and for concept development.

Concerning the *validity* of a study the most important issue is that the research process was adequate to the research question, i.e. the adequacy of the sampling, development of the questions and the coding scheme etc.

For the validity of my research the following aspects are important:

- Careful case selection: a representativeness of the cases and subjects selected for the phenomenon/ concept was assured by a clear and unambiguous sampling method/ "theoretical sampling" (i.e. selection of places/persons/documents the basis of the developed concepts).
- Triangulation of data collection as well as of data analysis methods.
- In order to get different views from participants and non-participants, the surrounding neighbors were included in the study.
- Conducting of pre-fieldwork to find out about possible interviewees, testing the concepts and their operationalization in the interview questions and observation situations. Interview guideline and questionnaire were "cross-checked" by an assistant researcher (especially the translations).
- It was anticipated that a limitation in validity could result from the camera influence. The camera was not perceived to be disturbing or distracting except in one case where the interview was upon request only sound recorded. Shrum, Duque & Brown (2005) state that the camera even has effects that can be seen as an asset.
- Congruence: the concepts are empirically grounded, i.e. are derived primarily from the data not only from theory. I had the possibility to discuss them with the participants of the study. Because of time constraints could *not* apply participatory group interview techniques, communicative validation or video feedback session.
- The developed category system was "checked" beforehand by another researcher for validity. Constant verification and modification of categories during the research process ensured their validity.
- It tried to be open to other concepts, conditions, or factors that might have influenced the investigated concepts and I have included them in the explanation (e.g. group specific factors, local settings etc.). The fact, that the phenomenon is a process and the study comes in at one certain point should not be underestimated.
- Last but not least it was ensured that the results are relevant and useful for the practice by consulting session with practitioners.

Film as research method – an experiment

My recommendations concerning the filming methodology can be summarized as follows:

- The filming is possible with a low budget equipment only for filming outdoors and recording 1-2 hour interviews (digital-video camera, tripod, a separate clip-on microphone is necessary).
- For editing professional help is needed and the use of computer technology (high hardware requirements) and semi-professional software is necessary.
- I found that it is actually possible to film the interviews with only one experienced researcher who is interviewer and camera person at the same time. However, the quality of the filmed images, even with a lot of experience, will not be satisfactory (camera cannot be handled) and therefore it is highly recommended to have a second person for filming and technical handling.
- When having to work with interpreting it is not advisable to use this filming method, it is hardly possible to edit the material later on.
- Attention should be paid to the premise of the research questions over the filming. This means that the research should not be disturbed by the filming, nothing should be staged or said for the recording and spontaneity should never be excluded.
- One of the main problems I encountered was related to the academic rules that are bound to disciplines and do not allow the combination of a written and film document for an academic degree. This issue has to be overcome in order to enable social science students to use film as research method.

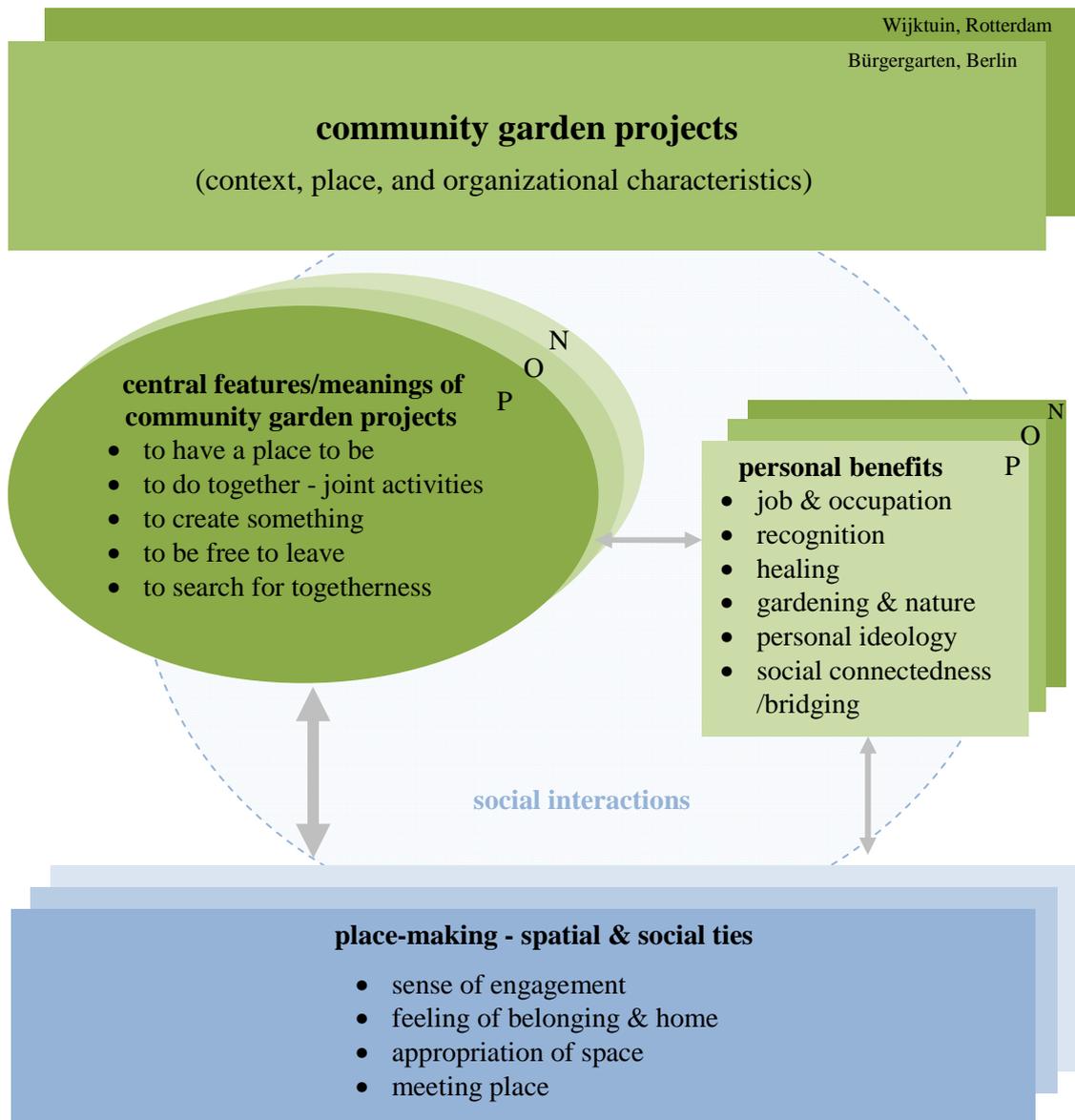
Chapter 4: Findings on research questions: The perceptions on community gardens by organizers, participants, and surrounding neighbors

In this chapter the findings on how organizers, participants, and surrounding neighbors perceive the community garden projects are presented. The differences between the perceptions of the three respondent groups are analyzed and the findings on organizational features and different project approaches are discussed concerning their implications for the conceptual model.

The results are discussed within their analytical category. Besides, a few personal case stories are presented (see boxes) in order to give a picture on the stories of the individual respondents.

As presented in Chapter 3.5, from the first analysis steps based on coding, 65 analytical categories were derived which were grouped around central categories. In the next analytical step, I conducted a conceptual analysis based on the “constant comparative method” (Glaser & Strauss 1967). As a result, the categories were organized into a *conceptual model* that incorporates their interrelations and tries to explain all the results of my study in one model. This result scheme on the perceptions of community garden projects is forming the framework of this chapter (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Result scheme - conceptual model on meanings of community garden projects



The model incorporates the context and organization of each project and the differentiation in respondent groups. The figure shows how the meanings of the community garden projects for the different respondent groups can be summarized in five central features (sub-categories). These features are cross-cutting, that means they can be observed in both projects and across all respondent groups. They are ‘collective meanings’ in the sense that they hold true not only for certain individuals (with certain motivations or roles) but I found that those features are perceived by possibly ‘all’ the different individual respondents.

Most concepts in the model are ‘integrated concepts’, that is they subsume other categories. All concepts are interrelated. As indicated by the arrow in the scheme the main interrelationship exists between place-making and the central features which will be explained in detail.

In addition to the general meanings or central features, community garden projects can bring about personal benefits such as having an occupation, recognition, social connectedness etc.

(sub-categories). Those individual meanings are dependent on the personal life situation and characteristics of the individual respondents and do not hold true for the perceptions of all participants, organizers and neighbors. Therefore, I called them personal benefits (main category) and the arrows indicate that they are interrelated with the central features.

The central meanings of community garden projects lead to a sense of engagement and belonging, and are connected to the appropriation of space as well as to the concept of meeting place which constitutes the central concept of place-making. Place-making processes incorporate spatial and social ties (see also Chapter 2).

In my analysis of the community garden projects place-making is seen as the underlying and cross-cutting concept. It is the core concept of the empirically grounded theoretical model derived from my case study analysis. In the graphic it is indicated that social interactions are the connecting category in the background that plays a role in all central categories of the model (as discussed below). So the concepts of social connectedness and place-making are interrelated (which does not mean this is a causal relationship).⁹

In contrast to my pre-empirical conceptual framework presented in Chapter 2.2, this empirical conceptual model shows a more differentiated picture of community garden projects based on the central research question: *Which social processes and project features make the community gardens become understood by the organizers, participants, and surrounding neighbors as projects that foster processes of place-making and social connectedness?*

There was an interesting shift throughout the process of my research which is reflected in the model. In the beginning two concepts were to be investigated - social connectedness and place-making - which were assessed as equally important. In the resulting conceptual model the different 'social aspects' that were bundled initially together in one concept were reconfigured. This differentiation is a result and has not been made prior to the empirical analysis. The strong presence of social connectedness as concept is symbolized by the all-encompassing circle of "social interaction" in the graphic. Also the separate category of social connectedness focusing on the bridging social capital creation is included under personal benefits.

⁹ It is not stated that place-making necessarily leads to social connectedness and reverse social connectedness does not have to imply place-making processes.

4.1 Central features and meanings of community garden projects

First, there are the meanings the respondents ascribe to the garden projects that are considered to be the central cross-cutting features of community gardening.

Central features/meanings of community garden projects:

- to have a place to be
- to do together - joint activities
- to create something
- to be free do what you like and to leave
- to search for togetherness & community

These meanings refer among other things to the benefits gained from the gardens, the values and ideas connected to them, as well as the personal importance assigned to them.

Most of the meaning categories reflect individual perceptions by any of the participants (or organizers) and possibly some meaning has been mentioned only by one or two respondents. There are also participants, mostly the less active ones, who do not ascribe much of a *special* meaning to the garden project. They just want to have a garden, such as Till and Dirk in Berlin. They like it for their children, to show them “how a carrot grows” and to harvest their own vegetables. They do not attend the meetings or the garden work days. *“For the others this might be their occupation or hobby, I have no time for that.”* (Participant 13/ Berlin).

This leads me to the first and key category on meaning elaborated from my empirical findings.

4.1.1 ‘Just be here’ - to have a place to be

In the “Wijk tuin het Oude Westen”, Rotterdam, the central category of meanings is expressed as *“Just be here”* (Wilma, Participant 1/ Rotterdam).

“I think the common thing is that they like to be here. Not even to work here but to BE here. To be in the garden and see the green around them.” (Participant 1/ Rotterdam)

“You know SIT. And we drink coffee, we talk.” (Participant 6/ Rotterdam)

But what does this *just being in a place* mean? It means to have a place for yourself where you can be and sit, without demands and pressure.

“They come in and sit and have some tea and talk a little bit, and say: ‘oh how are you?’ Mainly that is the purpose of the garden. (Liesbeth, Participant 6/ Rotterdam)

The “just” being and talking a little bit, the small talk, the everyday practice of sitting and chatting (and not going too deep, being too serious) is an important element.

“And then if a woman sits in her house and you have nothing to do, she can just come and sit there.” (Participant 6/ Rotterdam)

It also means to be together in a group and a way out of the isolation some people experience staying at home.

“I think it can be nice for some people who live on their own and stay in the house...people that for some reason have no job or sit at home or are maybe a little bit shy or it is

difficult for them to make contact maybe... So people like that maybe can enjoy it. But that is with every voluntary work.” (Liesbeth, Participant 6/ Rotterdam)

So the need for such a place has to do with the personal life situation of the participants. The garden has sometimes the purpose of giving a secured base, a ground to stand on, which I call “a place that holds”.

“What holds me here: I have a very insecure life situation, from a social perspective and personally. I have to struggle quite a lot these days. So for me this is the place where I can rest. Every time when I am here I am content. Here is the pond, my patch, maybe the other people... most of the times you meet the same people and you can talk a little bit.” (Petra, Participant 1/ Berlin)

“For me this is a real foothold (“echter Halt”), a buffer zone against this frustration. That is the function of this garden for me personally. My pets at home have the same function. You just have to find something for yourself that keeps you up and going.” (ibid)

The creation of such a *place that holds* complies also with the intention and perception of the organizers.

“A fixed place is important because many people nowadays are tossed back and forth. There is lack of securities, also spatial ones. People have to be mobile and flexible in their job and hardly anybody has a fixed team to belong to regularly. Or people are on welfare and are just parked at home.

And here you are in a real place and you can be real (“Und hier ist man real”). Here you are doing something real. That is something missing for the young and highly educated people who often have too many things virtual and too little real people around them. That is a problem of the separation and individualization nowadays. This here (the garden) is a counter force.” (Sabine, Organizer 7/ Berlin)

Having a place to be involves also a sense of belonging and the feeling of being welcome at the place. This feeling of being part of the place is clearly shown in the following quote:

“You can relax, you can tell everything you want. Like me I can tell everything. They listen to me.” (Hellen, Participant 3/ Rotterdam)

To be accepted to tell everything means for Hellen that she is part of the group. ‘To be here’ also means to be part of a social group and, at the same time of a ‘meaningful social space’, as discussed in the next chapter. Here, I refer to the notion of place as presented in Chapter 2.3.1. The community garden as a place is established by the social contacts and meanings ascribed to it. To have a place ‘to be’ means a place has gained meaning through social action (Blokland 2001) by personal, group, and cultural processes (Altman & Low 1992).

4.1.2 'To do together' - joint activities

"They have the need to do something and they really like it." (Natalie, Organizer 9/ Rotterdam)

Another theme in the community gardens is "to do things". This is a concept with many facets. It seems to be that doing something *together* and engage in joint activities is the central aspect here.

"They like to work with each other. Many times when you work in a group with each other, you do more. That is nice to do and it is gezellig." (Anita, Participant 2/ Rotterdam)

This category is closely connected to the category of sociability or 'Gezelligheid' in Dutch. *"They are all en betje gezellig" (Participant 3/ Rotterdam)* which means "they are all a little bit sociable or convivial".

"Because it is good to be together on a day that is nice." (Wilma, Participant 1/ Rotterdam)

So, the aspect of "doing things" in a joint effort and self-organized manner is a theme in the garden project on its own.

"I have the feeling we work good. We are working together, we can talk together. [...] We do together" (Hellen, Participant 3/ Rotterdam)

The social aspect of 'talking and doing together' is an important feature of gardening as activity:

"I think it is a good thing that people work together in the garden, and that they pick out the weeds together. You can talk. If you have your social contacts during picking the weeds - it works double - you get two positive things working in the garden." (Jeroen, Participant 8/ Rotterdam)

Especially in the Rotterdam project an emphasis is put on the 'gardening together' with the aim that the participants know each other, have more fun, and thereby also can be more 'productive'.

"That is why the Tuinwerkdag (joint garden work day) is so important because they see each other. Work with each other. Because when you work alone it is not so stimulating like if you are talking and working together." (Natalie, Organizer9/ Rotterdam)

Something similar says Frauke the organizer from the Laskerwiese, Berlin. The joint activities and the communal setting are very important in practice since some things like having a compost or the gardening equipment only make sense if a group organizes them jointly. *"There are clearly things that only work because you do them together. We cannot all have our own pond for example." (Frauke, Organizer 4/ Berlin).*

"If you build a pond together, then everybody is equal." (Sabine Organizer 7/ Berlin). Here, collective activities are associated with group bonding. This story from the 'Bürgergarten' on how they built the pond in a joint effort together with many people was told to me various times. It seems to be the event that constituted the community. The quote resembles the -

maybe a bit romanticizing - idea that working and building together can create a feeling of equity¹⁰.

“So we worked here TOGETHER. [...] It was very nice to sit together with other people and work in the garden. [...] Just around each other, everybody with her or his own task.” (Liesbeth, Participant 6/ Rotterdam)

The notion of togetherness plays an important role in the garden projects as I will discuss further below (Chapter 4.1.5).

However, there are also a few *contradicting statements* by participants who do not care so much about being together.

“Everybody is on their own piece. We do not talk. We meet seldom, only if we make an appointment. We usually do not work at the same time or the other one is on the other side.” (Gera, Participant 4/ Rotterdam)

Also in Berlin there are people who do not want to be part of the coziness of “gezelligheid” and just want to do their own thing (see also below under ‘Freedom’). Some participants “*come for the garden itself not for the people*” (Participant 7/ Rotterdam). Clearly, some people do not appreciate too much sociability and just want to be alone.

“My main wish is that they do not involve too much with me. Leave me quiet. The garden is more to be alone, other activities to be with people. [...] The people are nice because they do not interfere with my things, they do not want to know everything about me and respect me, leave me quiet.” (Gera, Participant 4/ Rotterdam)

4.1.3 ‘To create something’

Directly linked to the “doing together” category is the cross-cutting category of “to create something”. This comprises not only creation and active participation but also creativity and the idea of self-actualization.

“In gardening you create something and when it comes out it is yours. You have created it. It is like taking care of something. Especially if you do not have children. It is remarkable but many of the gardeners do not have children. It is like having something for yourself and create something for yourself.” (Natalie, Organizer / Rotterdam)

To be able to create by yourself and to be actively involved signifies for Sabine, organizer in Berlin, to get a sense of achievement and gain respect. According to her this is important when institutions offer activities in the ‘welfare-to-work’ and volunteer sector.

“And here you are doing something real. [...] Activities, in which they can do something serious, where they are needed and can develop something independently and bring in their own ideas. This you have in gardening.” (Sabine, Organizer 7/ Berlin)

She stresses that in gardening this immediate achievement is possible from which you can gain positive feedback and she compares it to other activities such as cooking. This category

¹⁰ Connected to this, Blokland (2008a) states that doing something together does not necessarily bring about community development and social capital in every case (p. 161).

is closely connected to the recognition category (see below). It is about creating something visible and real where one can see or taste the results directly. This is a rewarding feature of the gardening activity itself that poses a positive contrast to some people's everyday life experience, for example in trying to get a job.

"The gardening work makes me feel good because I can see that something is happening. I can plan and I can realize it. Something actually happens." (Participant 1/ Berlin)

This category can be linked to the theoretical approaches on appropriation of space that consider everyday practices to be crucial for creative spatial practices (e.g. Petrescu n.d.). Connected to this, in the notion of "lived space" in alternative spatial practices (Shields 2004) the 'production of place' through gardening and other activities includes a symbolic aspect. This symbolic appropriation of space refers to place-making in terms of Blokland (2001) denoting the "production of places for social identity formation" (p. 269).

4.1.4 Freedom – 'to do what you like and to leave'

"I am free here. I can do what I want when I work here." (Anita, Participant 2/ Rotterdam)

In my analysis I found a new meaning of the garden projects in the freedom of action, in the pleasure to do what you like and to come and go whenever you want.

"I want to do what I like. That is it. And I am lucky that I can do it." (Participant 1/ Rotterdam)

This idea of freedom plays a role on various levels: in the garden activity as a job and as a volunteering activity as well as in the choice of type of involvement, functions, activities, and times. For Liesbeth from Rotterdam her main theme is this freedom in her voluntary activity.

"For me this is the main thing. That you work with people, that you do the thing that you like and that people like the things they do and like to come here." (Liesbeth, Participant 6/ Rotterdam)

Here also the freedom to leave whenever you like is an issue.

"It was very nice to sit there together with other people and work in the garden. And then I worked a few hours and then I said bye bye, see you next week" (Liesbeth, Participant 6/ Rotterdam)

"And then when we are finished working, we say 'oh come we have time for coffee'. And then somebody says, 'I go home, I go to run my errands'. And then we say 'okay, maybe next week maybe see you again'." (Hellen, Participant 3/ Rotterdam)

Moore (1897) described this as "the democratic element which is most essential - the absolute freedom to come and go as one pleases" (p. 6). He gives this value to the Saloon, the bar which he puts in contrast to a club "where they would offer conventions instead of freedom" (*ibid*, p. 6). This "democratic freedom" that is essential to social life is inherent to the gardening activity.

“One participant told me at first it was irritating that he worked so hard and everybody else just cared about their own space. But then he respected that because here is a place for people who do that.” (Natalie, Organizer 9/ Rotterdam)

It seems a community garden can be successful if the participants are given a space for realizing their own thing and for being free to do what they want. Also many non-participants (neighbors) say that the main reason not to join is the fear of rigid rules and duties like in a club or association.

4.1.5 Search for togetherness and community

An important meaning or feature of the garden projects is the search for the *feeling of togetherness* (“Zusammgehörigkeitsgefühl”). This can be connected to the idea of creating a “community” or “second family”.

“I hope that we get together more and a group will form. That a community is created that takes also responsibility. There are good starting points for this here, in the talks we have or when taking care of the watering, when somebody goes on vacation.” (Petra, Participant 1/ Berlin)

Some participants in Berlin are longing for an ‘urban village’ or ‘small town atmosphere’ where you can get to know each other by meeting unintentionally and get acquainted slowly and on a long-term basis¹¹. Also Frank in Berlin hopes that the people will grow together more and the garden community will become a “second family” for him in the future.

“I think the people who live in the direct neighborhood can grow closer together again. They also talk with each other now. And one knows the other. Not as we know it from the West, that you hardly know your neighbors.” (Frank, Participant 6/ Berlin)

In the Berlin project an interesting motive is the reestablishment of neighborhood bonds as they existed in times of the socialist GDR before the reunification in 1989.

“This we did not have before (the reunification). Everybody knew each other in our house and we did things together.” (ibid)

This togetherness was lost after the reunification and is often claimed as the biggest losses of the ‘westernization’. *“Everybody just cares about himself. Everybody has to struggle with his own problems” (ibid).*

Frank and some other participants have lost their job and centers of life (he was politically involved, had a good job and a family that also broke apart). In addition, they lost their “Zusammgehörigkeitsgefühl”, the feeling of togetherness in their houses and neighborhoods. The latter they want to rebuild again through the community garden project. *“What is lost in the everyday life could be healed here a little bit.” (ibid).*

¹¹ Original: “Ich würde gerne Leute haben, mit denen man sich nach und nach kennenlernt. Wie in der Kleinstadt, auf Dauer. Das ist in Berlin schwierig.” (Participant 1/ Berlin)

Box 1: [Case story on personal benefits of the garden project and the search for togetherness]

Peer, 42 years old, most active participant from Berlin, lives in the housing block across the street from the Bürgerpark for 20 years.

“I am here every day. That is fun. We always work together.” (Peer Participant 5/ Berlin)

Peer mentions rather the social component comprised of getting to know the people and “togetherness” (“Zusammenhalt”). Personally, he has found “an occupation for himself” which is the most important benefit for him. On my question what would be missing in the neighborhood if there would not be the garden he says: “*For example occupation for me, no?!*” and laughs. He is unemployed but does not talk much about it, the garden is his work. The project is very important for him and his entire family.

“I need this here. Otherwise the walls would cave in on me just being at home (“sonst würde mir zu Hause die Decke auf den Kopf fallen”). I need physical activity. If I do not have that I go crazy. I would sit at home and repaper one room after the other every day. No, really that is not what I want.” (Peer)

He has found meaningfulness in the gardening and likes it “*with his whole heart*”. One cannot imagine what he has done before he joined the project one year ago. Remarkable is that before joining the garden Peer says not to have done any volunteer work or being member in an association or club. He just found out coincidentally that gardening is his purpose.

Finding this meaning for his life made him happy, “*I am completely happy and want this all to stay as it is, the people to stay the same*” (*ibid*).

Here it also seems to be very important that all activities are done jointly and people help each other.

“Even if we are all very different, if the chips are down everybody is there. And that is important.” (ibid)

These ideas of bonding like in a family and relying on each other he shares with his friend Frank whom he found in the project. Peer is a person that makes an effort to get in contact and thereby upholds a lot of the communication of the project group.

“To talk a lot! I just always go up to everybody and chat with them. And then, by a lot of talking we got to, not talking but doing now. So, a group was created that does everything together and works here together every day.” (ibid)

This little group around him consists of basically two more people and some other people who join mostly for the coffee breaks. They completely belong to the place and inhabit it “*from seven in the morning on until the late afternoon every day*”.

He uses his own social ability which he considers as an asset that is based on his own culture stemming from the socialist GDR times.

“Look, I grew up in the GDR and that means a lot. There we have learned this, to help each other and to make something out of nothing, you understand? To make candy out of shit, as we say.” (ibid)

His values and ideology are communitarian. To help each other and to create a certain togetherness is extremely important to him.

“This we have learned and that helps us here. Believe me. To go up to the people and ask: ‘come on help’ that does not really work in the West, I guess. An ‘Ossi’ (Eastern German) is much more helpful and just joins in fast. That is so much in my head still. And that is good here, talk to the people and do.” (ibid)

Also the **neighbors** who live across the street of the community garden in Berlin say that there was a lot of social contact before. One neighbor says they had parties together in their housing block where everybody contributed something. It was *“a nice feeling”* a *“real togetherness”* (Neighbor 4/ Berlin). However, she does not think at all the garden could bring this back. She is very negative about it and actually thinks the place was better before without a park there, the dogs could go there. She does not believe in the idea of getting more contacts in the neighborhood.

“It is just not the time anymore, everybody has to fight with his own life, social contacts are not possible anymore. This is not in their heads anymore.” (Neighbor 4 / Berlin)

Another neighbor’s opinion is a little more differentiated and positive about the neighborhood park.

“Before we were all depending on each other, it was more social. [...] But, it is not true that in the East everything was better, do not believe that! The community was forced on you, we had to participate. We just sat together once or twice and in the end we only said hello and the contact was cold. [...] A lot of things changed with the money coming in. The money brought an attitude of ‘here take this’... so we are not depending on each other anymore.” (Neighbor 3/ Berlin)

This category also raises the question why there is the search for togetherness. There should be an instrumental reason why people do or do not have a need for feeling this hold in a group and for knowing their neighbors. One reason is supposedly to get the benefit of social connectedness and bridging social capital which is discussed below (Chapter 4.2.6). There is abundant research on the topic of community creation on the neighborhood level (e.g. Blockland 2008b) which I will not discuss in detail at this point. One crucial point to mention is that communities in such an ‘individualized’ urban setting are so heterogeneous that one cannot talk about a common interest that enables a feeling of togetherness. Especially, in the social and structural transformation after the reunification in Berlin there seems to be change from a (forced) homogeneous community to ‘no community at all’ which possibly creates this kind of longing for something lost, the participants of the garden project reveal.

So the question arises if this finding that is related to historical and cultural conditions in Germany can be generalized for other cases, which can be only found out in another

research. The ‘search for togetherness’ could found less in the case of the Rotterdam project. Here the concept of doing together and “Gezelligheid” is more important (Chapter 4.1.2).

4.1.6 Conclusion on central features and meanings

The five presented central meanings are closely connected to each other. Altogether they constitute the cross-cutting main features of the two case study projects for the different participant groups. That means, to have a place to be, to do in joint action, to create something and, at the same time, being free to join and to leave and being driven by an endeavor for togetherness are the central aspects of a community garden project for the respondents. They are constituents of the community gardens and of the place-making processes involved. At the same time they are linked to the dimension of social interaction.

The central category of “just be here” represents the idea that the garden provides a space for people to be, for everyday practices like ‘sitting and chatting’ which closely connects to the meanings of community gardens as places based on social relations and actions (see Chapter 2.3). So there is a close interrelationship to the concept of place-making which is elaborated in Chapter 4.3. In addition, the importance of joint activity and togetherness become clear in the findings as well as the active part of doing and creating something which links to the concept of appropriation of space (see Chapter 4.3.3). The “democratic freedom” to leave and to do what you like is a new concept found in the open coding process and in connection to the literature (Moore 1897). This idea of independence and freedom which is crucial for engagement in community gardens is discussed further in Chapter 4.3.1.

4.2 Personal benefits

In addition to the general or cross-cutting meanings I identified personal benefits that the people involved gain from the participation in the garden projects. *What do the people get out of the garden projects personally, why do they engage in the garden projects, and what would be missing without the gardens?*

I found many meanings that relate to this question. Here, six main themes that represent the personal benefits the participants and organizers gain from the garden projects are highlighted. These benefits are also perceived by the surrounding neighbors, as the analysis of the survey showed.

Personal benefits:

- to have a job & occupation
- recognition - to be needed and accepted
- healing and calming
- gardening and nature
- fulfill personal ideology
- social connectedness & bridging

It can be observed that on the personal benefits often times directly related to the life situation of the person and reveal a personal matter or motivation to participate in the project.

“Some people do volunteer work to develop themselves and to not get isolated. There are two sorts: some want to forget their own life and dedicate it to something else and some who are more educated. They make an effort to make something out of themselves. They want to do something for their own good - to feel good, by doing something for the community.” (Natalie 01:25)

How all six different categories blend together is best presented in the personal story of a participant in Rotterdam.

Box 2: [Case story: Hellen originally from Cameroun, Participant / Rotterdam]

“Because I have nothing else to do, I have no job, so I go there I am busy, I do my thing, when I come home then it is better. Than sitting here thinking: Oh I have no job, what am I going to do? You get more nervous! So you go there, you can talk to the bird you talk to... yeah. I like it, you meet people. It is better for me to get out, talk to people with my big mouth, laugh, drink tea. When I sit at home, I eat my wall, you understand? (laughs).” 00:49

“But it is not nice when you only go walking in the shopping when you have nothing to buy, because you have no money. But when you are in the garden, you can talk with the plant. You can make your fingers green. You know you touch nature! It makes you forget small things. I do not know. Maybe I am from the jungle but we believe in that. Maybe because I was born in the jungle so I believe in that if you are nervous you go walk a little bit. You go walk in the park.

Here in Europe you people have a park. But we in Africa you go behind your house because there is trees. You walk a little bit. By half an hour it will make your brain calm and you come back. So I find it makes my brain relax. And thanks, I am very very proud that I am doing that. (laughs)” 00:35

“That is Hellen you know, this is me (laughs). If I see somebody working I say come here come inside. Get a cup of coffee, eh tea (laughs). I like to invite people. Because I know what happened to me, when I came here, when I did not have friends. I was feeling lonely. So I think that is why I like to have friends.” 00:27

4.2.1 Having a job and an occupation – “This is my work”

One central personal benefit is to have an occupation and keeping oneself busy. Many people are long-term or temporarily unemployed and seek a task in life or just want something to do (see case story above).

“For me it is important that I have an occupation. That I keep myself busy and do something. And meet people you know?” (Peer, Participant 5/ Berlin)

“I was at home, I had no work. I thought it is nice to do. You have to do something and feel good. So I chose this. (Liesbeth, Participant 6/ Rotterdam)

Many participants in both case study projects even perceive the gardening activity as their work or job and literally refer to it as such. In the interview Hellen refers various times to the

gardening project as 'her work'. When I called her to see her again she told me "*I am on vacation*" - so I could not meet her.

"Peer is also unemployed, for a long time. But he just does so much here although he gets zero money for it. This is his work you can say." (Participant 1/ Berlin)

When I asked Gera, the 79 year old lady in the Wijktuin about her professional life she answered seriously, almost indignantly: "*I am still a volunteer! Then you are really responsible for that patch!*" (Participant 4/ Rotterdam). She identifies with the garden. In the summer she is there several times per week and sometimes takes the task of opening the garden a lunch time.

This topic of finding a substitute for a work on the job market is connected to the general discourse on job insecurity and unemployment in society. This issue was mostly relevant in the Berlin project where it was dominating the daily conversations of the project participants as well as the neighbors. The participants give importance to the cutback of the welfare state in Germany and specifically to the economic situation of Berlin ("*Berlin is poor but sexy*" said one participant referring to a popular slogan). In contrast, I found in Rotterdam statements like *„there is so much money here"* (Wilma, Participant 1/ Rotterdam). Likewise, the "ID-Banen" and other welfare to work jobs are seen much more positive amongst organizers and participants and seem to be less stigmatized than in Berlin. Here, the debate around "Hartz IV" is dominant: the precarious conditions of the freelance jobs and welfare-to-work ("Ein-Euro-Jobs") which are commonly seen as "*Billigjobs*" (second rate).

4.2.2 Recognition – ‘to be needed and accepted’

Closely related to the issue of having an occupation is the benefit of getting recognition and doing something "meaningful". The thriving for acceptance and recognition is related to feelings of insecurity that may result from the respective life situations or from being long term unemployed.

"Yes, the people who matter actually value my work here. They appreciate what I do and say: 'Nice what you have done'. Or they invite me for lunch or we have a barbecue. That is fine. It is worth a lot I think." (Peer, Participant 5/ Berlin)

One participant describes the environment as being open to all kinds of people and „although they are unemployed“, respect is paid.

"There is a certain acceptance. I am not the only unemployed here. And one was not judged according to the job you have and there was not such an obvious hierarchy. Rather the main thing is what one does and what you put in. The craftsmen that work here with a '1-Euro-Job' (welfare to work) are very much respected because of their work. I was attracted to this." (Petra, Participant 1/Berlin)

For the project itself recognition seems to be one crucial reward and requirement for engagement. Therefore, the organizers are also concerned about giving recognition and adding meaning to the activity. We need a "culture of recognition" for the volunteers, says Frauke (Organizer / Berlin).

„You have a better quality of life when you are needed and you do something meaningful, and here also where you can use a beautiful place." (Sabine, Organizer 7/ Berlin)

Respect and acceptance, especially to feel responsible, is also an issue in the Wijkstuin project.

“They do not work, none of them. They are on welfare. ... If people are on welfare they feel unworthy so it is a good thing for them to come out because you are getting money from the government but you are doing something for it.” (Natalie, Organizer 9/ Rotterdam)

4.2.3 Healing and calming

An essential meaning of the gardening project for the participants is the healing and calming effect of the gardening activity for themselves.

“The garden here it makes me feel calm. Because I go there, I talk to the people.” (Participant 3/ Rotterdam)

The garden’s meanings are sometimes related to the life circumstances of a person which can be related to overcoming a life crisis. “And a lot of them somewhere their life got stuck, they have some trouble” (Participant 1/Rotterdam, 00:15). Overcoming a break down or psychological problems is an important function of the garden projects. It is remarkable that many of the participants in both projects are people with personal problems.

“It makes you forget small things. You walk a little bit. By half an hour it will make your brain calm and you come back. So I find it makes my brain relax.” (Hellen, Participant 3/ Rotterdam)

Some participants in the Rotterdam project were specifically sent there as rehabilitation measure by their doctors or social workers as a form of “occupational therapy” (see interview Participant 3/Rotterdam, who is telling about her doctor who advised her to join the project).

“You know, like this I can get my nervousness a little bit down.” (Participant 3/ Rotterdam)

This quote shows the quality of the gardening activity for a person who still needs to get her ‘feet back on the ground’ and who is trying to slowly get integrated again. To be able to implement something and see something happen (see Chapter 4.1.3 “to create something”) is a very important factor after being frustrated by the job market on many occasions - as one personal story of a Berlin participant shows.

“I have really declined socially in the last years. And I arrived here frustrated. For me this is a real foothold here to buffer this frustration. That is the function this garden has for me personally. My pets at home have the same function. One has to find something that keeps you up and going.” (Participant 1/ Berlin)

4.2.4 Gardening - “You know you touch nature!”

Another more “earthly” but central meaning of the community garden is – not surprisingly – gardening. Most people just want to have a garden; they have a serious interest in plants and want to learn about horticulture. They like to plant and to be outside with fresh air and contact with nature.¹²

“You can talk with the plants. You can make your fingers green.” (Hellen, Participant 3/ Rotterdam)

“Because we live in the city and it is very nice to work with your hands and to work with plants. Get dirty, move” (Liesbeth, Participant 6/ Rotterdam)

The experience of nature “in the middle of the city” is important for most participants. The meaning of gardening is closely connected to other categories like “doing things” jointly and connecting to the ground and place.

“I come for the gardening itself... And to be outside. This actually is the most important thing at this moment.” (Arina, Participant 7/ Rotterdam)

I found interesting that the plants and the communication around them seem to have a mediating function (see explanation below), in particular for the relations within the group.

“Sometimes we talk about [personal things] ... But mostly we only talk about what a beautiful plant and such [...] You know we talk about nature. About the plants, the flowers. But we never talk about when we have a problem, no. But if somebody has a problem there... We just conversate, we walk around, we do our things and we forget about it.” (Hellen Participant 3/ Rotterdam)

Most participants in both projects stress that their interpersonal contact in the groups is based on or restricted to talking about the plants. This talking about something else even if you might have own personal issues pressing can have a relieving and distracting effect.

“We always have something to talk about - the plants. You can always say: ‘Oh, what a great plant that is’, or ‘oh, the lice have destroyed my spinach’... that makes it easy.” (Petra, Participant 1/ Berlin)

The people tell stories about the plants, which say a lot about the meanings of the gardening activity for them. Like Gera talks about her “Cyclame” (flower) and at the same time tells a lot of what it means to have her own choice or freewill and do her own thing in the garden. Even most of the conflicts seem to arise and circle around certain plants or how to cut a tree.

Moreover, the plants and nature have a mediating function for the interaction of the gardeners with the urban surroundings. If the people from the neighborhood take vegetables and fruits, through garbage in the pond or destroy a plant - the non-living things also mediate interaction. The story about ‘unsere Esche’ (‘our ash tree’) is one example of such a mediating function. The central tree of the Bürgergarten was completely chopped off in a vandalism act. Rapidly it grew new branches and leaves and now it almost looks like before.

¹² Original: “Man macht das weil man Interesse an Gartensachen hat. Sonst macht man das nicht. Spass in der Erde zu buddeln und Sachen wachsen zu sehen.” (Petra 00:49)

“The ash tree really grows 5 cm per week. It shows everybody who is the winner. It deserves to stay.” (Henner, Participant 3/ Berlin)

“People here do not give up right away. They build up again, also their support for each other. One put some liquid pitch on the tree, one put a sign for the vandals, and another one...” (Organizer 7/ Berlin). Thereby, a collective narrative or meaning was created showing the bonding and resilience of the group. *“You see, nature wins over all.”* says Petra, a participant.

In this case it is interesting to open up the interpretation: the plants can be seen as mediating artefacts which a concept from activity theory and the socio-cultural school of cultural psychology (Engeström & Cole 1991). According to this approach all activity is taking place in “Activity Systems” and mediated by artefacts: “The Re-mediation of action” by means of the internalization and externalization of an artefact. The mediating artefact not only amplifies, it opens up new possibilities of interaction and development (Engeström 1996). The tree story is a classical example for this theoretical concept of mediation of action.

4.2.5 ‘To fulfill personal ideology’

“So, we like to organize something good.” (Hellen)

All meanings that are connected to a certain ideology, belief, mentality, or political conviction, I have coded with the personal ideology category. Those ‘missions’ range from creating place quality and community to environmentalism, civic activism and “being social” which are seen as values to be promoted through the garden project. These ideological approaches and perceptions are mainly found in the organizers and the ‘leading participants’.

“Because I have always been into environmental questions and into the climate crisis...” (Wilma, Participant 1/ Rotterdam)

“I realized that there is a lot to do in our own country. If you do not do anything for your neighborhood, why go to Africa? I think that is egoistic. If you do not even say ‘hi’ to your own neighbor. People are in need also here.” (Natalie, Organizer 9/ Rotterdam)

The two organizers in both projects who belong to an institution (Sabine & Natalie) see the garden also as “means to an end” (Sabine, Organizer/ Berlin). This is to serve their institutional goals which consist in neighborhood integration as well as organize volunteering or welfare to work opportunities (see chapter 4.4.2).

Also the participants who did not initiate the garden projects but are very active as gardeners have their convictions that motivate them to engage.

“I find it quite important that people come to terms with each other (“sich arrangieren”) and start doing things and do not always take money for it. But do something to make it beautiful (“dass es schön wird”). Not only one person should do that but more people should do that, you know.” (Peer, Participant 5/ Berlin)

“If you do something for the others and if you do not ask what you get out of it. (Gerlinde, Participant 2/ Berlin)

To do something for others as a personal satisfaction is a well known motive in these kinds of projects. Some of the ideological motives are on a concrete level such as doing something

for the immediate neighborhood to keep it clean and make it greener as well as for certain target groups such as immigrants and old people.

“I also feel a little bit like helping to integrate. To be a little bit social.” (Gera, Participant 4/ Rotterdam)

4.2.6 Social connectedness and bridging -“maybe you will need the people one day”

As presented in Chapter 2.3, social connectedness has been conceptualized in this study based on the concept of social capital as involving bonding of a group of people and bridging between different groups of neighbors and socio-cultural groups (e.g. Putnam 2000). The creation, access and use of social capital has been investigated in detail as a central concept. However, in the presentation of the results I focus only on the aspects which reveal the predominant social phenomena in the community gardens. The central issue is the creation of social contacts and bridging social capital and less the mechanisms and networks between participants (bonding) and their personal social capital.

The personal benefit to build up one’s own social network is a different concept than the notion of sociability (‘Gezelligheid’ in Dutch) of doing something together in a group which was discussed in chapter 4.1.2.

“For some people it is important not to have a garden on their own, but that you meet people here. There are also singles here for whom the connectedness is important. The social contact is at least as important as the gardening. Otherwise people would have gone to rent an allotment garden instead. They really want to live like this and interact like this with each other.” (Sabine Organizer 7/ Berlin)

Social capital is defined as “actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network” or “to membership in a group which - provides each of its members with the backing of collectively-owned capital” (Bourdieu 1986, pp. 248-249). This is shown in the example of Jan who is a volunteer also in the Wijktuin and other garden projects in Rotterdam. He is a single and does not work and has found friendships through his various volunteer activities and appreciates the social contact and support of the project group.

“You can help each other if you have little problems. You can talk that out with each other.” (Participant 8/ Rotterdam)

In both projects there is a particular group of participants who very much count on the contacts and bridging social capital as benefit from their participation in the project. Interestingly, some interviews reveal social capital creation in its most classic sense. One example is Peer who met many new people through the project and established strong social ties. Peer says on the question what would be missing without the garden project: *“The contacts which one has established now with the people would be missing. Otherwise, we would not meet and get to know each other. We would not even get the idea to talk to the other people. How could we?” (Participant 05/ Berlin 00:44).*

Nevertheless, some of the participants and organizers do not seem to perceive the creation of social capital and the establishment of social contacts as *main* motivation or resource gained from the gardening activity. Especially a few participants in the Dutch project stressed that

the project had nothing to do with building up social contacts and networks. Remarkably, they consider their networks as private and the volunteer work as not influencing their personal social capital.

“This is a space only for me. I only deal with the people about the garden. This does not come in my private life. This do not want to take them to my home, they should not become friends. Keep it separate.” (Arina, Participant 7/ Rotterdam)

Bridging social capital (between groups) is directed towards “more outward looking networks with people across social cleavages” (Putnam 2000, p. 22). It creates access to external assets and information and therefore is important for “getting ahead” (*ibid*, p. 23).

“I know if I would call Gerlinde and her husband when I need something. For example, I am not well, please take me with your care here or there... they would do that right away. There they would stand. They would be here. Maybe you need the people one day.” (Peer, Participant 5/ Berlin)

Some participants’ striving for connectedness has the objective to build up social networks and bridging social capital as a means of access to resources, for example for finding a job.

“That was actually my hope (to meet people through the people here)” One participant told me that he was hoping to find contacts to get a job again. He has already tried to talk about this with many fellow gardeners.

“Or even that I could get to a business idea via all these people and the garden project. But absolutely nothing has come out of it so far. (Participant 1/ Berlin)

In the analysis I found that bridging between different social groups exists mainly and significantly in the Berlin community garden project. The Bürgergarten group is very mixed socially, culturally and age-wise. The participants strongly emphasize the differences between people and stress that they really get along with each other.

“The users of the garden are totally mixed (“Queerbeet”) from student to pensioner, from unemployed to consultant. Really mixed. Many different groups and classes are represented.” (Peer, Participant 5/ Berlin)

“People from different milieus can come together here. That is not so much the case in other spaces around here.” (Ronjon, Participant 8/ Berlin)

The student Ronjon from Berlin gives the garden a great value as “networking place”, “a meeting place where some people from the neighborhood come together who normally do not have much to do with each other.” (*Ronjon, Participant 8/ Berlin*). For example, he as a “night-active” student meets older people who have lived in the neighborhood for many years or young families who have a very different life style than he has.

The participants see the resources gained from having such a mixed group in the different cultures and diversity of personal backgrounds as well as in the different educational backgrounds. In the Bürgergarten one of the ‘sources’ of bridging social capital are the two organizers and the leading participant (Gerlinde). The most prominent and resourceful contact is the district mayor whom some of the participants and the organizers proudly say to have gotten in contact with through the project. *“I met the mayor!”* (Peer, Participant 5/ Berlin). Also there are a lot of connections to the media, many journalists have reported on

the project and have generated publicity and networks. In addition, I observed the personal exchange of advices on funding opportunities and on dealing with public authorities (in Berlin). In Rotterdam, I mostly observed vivid conversations on everyday advices and practical information.

The following quote shows that bridging is based on the social mix in the project group:

“Compare the extremes here: Karl-Heinz is unemployed and at nights he sells roses in bars. Then there is Gerlinde, she is a consultant. She drives a chic car and is quite well off. That is a huge gap between those two. And still they come together here and can communicate well with each other and everything. Nobody looks down on the other. So gaps are bridged” (Frank, Participant 6/ Berlin)

From ‘the other side of the gap’ Gerlinde describes her personal perspective on being a ‘social resource’ in the project:

“For those people it is much more important than for us. Because they feel taken seriously here (stresses this). The people who have spent years in the unemployment benefit agencies, they are psychological wrecks. If you can support them a little you should do so. And if it is only through a couple of conversations. And also if they bring something to eat to say ‘nice, tastes good’ and such things. Everybody how he can. That is important. Then they feel taken seriously and respected and therefore they like to come here.” (Gerlinde, Participant 2/ Berlin)

This attitude and the openly communicated gap between some group members who are ‘owners’ of social capital and others who are rather beneficiaries, was also observed in the Dutch project. There is “the core group of older active people” who has initiated the project. These are participants who are politically active and socially involved in many activities. On the other hand there are what I call ‘beneficiaries’ who just want to take part in the garden project without being so much involved in the issues around it. Interestingly Wilma says about this beneficiary group “for them it is a place to meet people” in contrast to her own group. So this means there are two kinds of groups who meet in the garden, the ones with more social resources and the others who want to acquire those.

Blokland (2008a) discusses why - mostly middle class - people with high social capital resources invest those in such projects although they may not get much in return. The reasons for this unequal deal she sees in the “cultural politics” and the “belief or a milieu of a loosely defined group or movement” (Blokland 2008a, p. 148) which is going beyond personal gains like the feeling of ‘doing good’ and fulfilling a personal ideology (see also Chapter 4.4.2 below).

Another aspect is raised by Glover (2004) who argues that social capital in community garden projects “can be both beneficial and costly, depending upon the social actor’s position within a functioning social network” (Glover 2004, p. 159). That means some ‘non-core group members’ have unequal access to social capital and are “unable to mobilize the social capital produced by the garden network to achieve their specific aims” (*ibid*, p. 159). This is shown in the case of Participant 01/ Berlin (see above) who actually tried to access work opportunities through garden project, but being in an outsider position, he was not able to do so.

So, the concept of social capital implies an unequal distribution. Blokland (2008a) observed the possibility that the reproduction or accumulation of social capital on a more individual level might happen instead of true bridging borders across social groups (Blokland 2008a, p. 167).

Concerning social connectedness, there is also always the aspect of exclusion of other groups when such a project community forms.

“On the one hand I think that it is a really good thing to do and that the neighbors get involved. But on the other hand I see that it is only a certain, specific group of people that does it and the rest fall outside.” (Arina, Participant 7 / Rotterdam)

In the Rotterdam project, also due to its small size, it is not a very mixed group (see Chapter 4.5). Here, actually Bloklands’ “middle class friends” argument holds true as well as the notion of “you cannot volunteer to volunteer - you have to be invited” (see Blokland 2008a, p. 162). On this I will argue further below that it is a ‘built-in’ feature of such projects.

4.2.7 Conclusion on personal benefits - “a centre that holds”

To conclude on the benefits of the garden project it seems that all of them have to do with the quality of ‘giving a hold’. The term “searching for a centre that holds” is borrowed from Zygmunt Bauman (1995) who used it in a different sense referring to the loss of nation-state power and guidance in the post modern world. He refers to the individuals who are re-directed towards the community (a “cultural formation”) in the “search of their co-ordinating principle” (p.151). I borrow his term and bring it to the level of individual needs to have a hold in life especially under the conditions of individualism, social insecurity, or being without job or family. My research shows that the benefits gained from the participation in a community garden project reflect this search for a place to belong to, a project or community to be part of, joint activities, a personal meaningful task and responsibility that involves to have an occupation and gain recognition.

It was also shown that the striving for urban green, gardening, and “touching nature” is not a trivial benefit but the meaning of the gardening activity itself and the mediating function of the plants was emphasized. Connected to this, motives such as finding “healing” and fulfilling personal ideologies were found to be important as personal benefit.

As expected, social connectedness is an important personal benefit gained in the community garden projects. Social contacts and networks are created, accessed and used and bonding and bridging social capital could be found. In accordance to the literature reviewed there are different groups of community gardeners, those who access and acquire social connectedness and those who invest their social capital and networks. This “remarkable working of social capital” has been discussed by Blokland (2008a) who refers to “cultural politics” as concepts behind it.

There are also examples of unequal access to social connectedness, and the exclusionary aspects concerning the community garden group have been discussed. Likewise, Blokland has stated that social capital processes are not always productive. In her work on community gardening Blokland refers to social capital as “crossing bridges and maintaining borders” (Blokland 2008a, p. 167) - However, I could not find that this is reproduced in the community garden projects (see Blokland 2008a) but that bridging takes place due to a

social, cultural, ethnical mix of people with different lifestyles and backgrounds in the project groups. Notwithstanding, some ‘non-core group members’ had less access to the social capital created in the gardening group, and beyond. I agree with the conclusion that neighborhood gardens “might just as well be sites where categorical borders and inequalities are reinforced as they can be sites where they are challenged” (Blokland 2008a, p. 167).

4.3 Place-making - creating a place to be

In my conceptual model (see p. 43) it is indicated that the central meanings of the community gardens as well as the personal benefits connect to a sense of engagement („to be involved & be part“) and belonging („to know where home is“). These categories are closely related to each other and form important aspects of place-making. They involve concepts like place attachment and the creation of place identity (see Chapter 2.3). Moreover, the quality of a social meeting place and the physical appropriation of space plays a role, therefore, the characteristics of the act of gardening itself are relevant (connection to the ground, planting and harvesting own vegetable, etc.).

4.3.1 Feeling of engagement – ‘To be involved and to engage’

The feeling of being part and involved is expressed by both ‘leading’ participants (Gerlinde/ Berlin, Wilma/ Rotterdam) in both projects similarly.

“Then you feel involved in something. This only happens if you do something for the others and if you do not ask what you get out of it. [...] To be involved and to engage - to know where your home is.” (Gerlinde, Participant 2/ Berlin)¹³

This quote by Gerlinde is interesting, because she connects the *sense of involvement in the project* to the feeling of home and belonging. It also refers to being engaged as doing something for others and thereby getting satisfaction (see also Chapter 4.4.2).

“...To feel good, by doing something for the community, because that makes you feel good. I think it gives you happiness, yes.” (Natalie, Organizer 9/ Rotterdam)

“It is nice to create a nice place for somebody.” (Arina, Participant 7/ Rotterdam)

Wilma explains her reasons for engaging in a public place and community project as a sense of being part of a community.

“It is for the people around you and for yourself. So I do not make that distinction between my own and the public. Because I am a part of it. [...] Because I strongly feel myself as a part of this neighborhood and of its history, I think what you do to make that better is not for the public far away outside or for the city council.” (Wilma, Participant 1/ Rotterdam)

¹³ Original: „Dann ist man eingebunden. Das kommt nur wenn man was tut für die anderen und nicht fragt warum und was hab ich davon. Das man eingebunden ist und sich engagiert und das man weiß wo man zu Hause ist, auf Deutsch gesagt.“ (Gerlinde, Participant 2/Berlin)

Here it becomes obvious that one already has to feel attached to a place and to the public realm around oneself in order to not to make a difference between the personal and the public benefit.

One of the neighbors of the Wijktoin perceives the community gardeners like this: “they probably are people who already have a good bond with other people” (Neighbor 2 / Rotterdam).

So according to these findings it seems that existing place attachment and neighborhood bonds are preconditions for public involvement in a community garden.

The involvement also differs strongly with regards to how the activity is perceived, what the engagement means to the different participants and organizers in the different projects.

Types of engagement:

I found that a great part of the meanings assigned to the garden projects circle around three ways of perceiving the gardening activity:

- a) Community gardening as having a job. As I explained in Chapter 4.2.1 some people are actually paid workers in welfare to work programs and some see the gardening activity as their ‘substitute’ job since they are unemployed.
- b) Others perceive their engagement as voluntary work or civic engagement. This is more connected the above mentioned “doing for others without payment” and working for public good.
- c) The third group of people perceive the community garden rather as having their own garden and working for their own good at the same time doing it in a group and having some tasks for the public realm.

This differs greatly in the two projects. Type a) exists in both projects, b) is rather represented in the Wijktoin/Rotterdam and c) is rather salient in the Bürgergarten in Berlin. So there are different approaches in the projects and different incentives and motivations to engage in the activity (see also Chapter 4.5.2).

Liesbeth from Rotterdam perceives herself only as a volunteer.

“A volkstuinje (allotment garden) I think that is different. That is something of your own. When somebody asks me to do something here, I say ja, that is what I would like to do (since I am a volunteer here).” (Liesbeth, Participant 06 / Rotterdam)

“It is a public park and the people can come in and talk or whatever they want. For me this is the main thing. [...] That is the purpose. Because it is not for us. For me it is a privilege when I can work here and I like it.” (ibid)

Hellen from Rotterdam explains the difference between volunteer work and working in one’s own garden:

“But I have my own private garden, where I can do what I want to do. In my own garden I change the plants nearly every three days. In the following nobody will complain because it is my private garden. I go and pick up this plant and say maybe it is too much, I put it there. That is private.” (Hellen, Participant 3/ Rotterdam)

I found that in the Wijktoin project which is based on a more top-down organization (see Chapter 4.5) and people see themselves as volunteer *workers* (see Chapter 4.2.1) some participants see their freedom ‘to do what you like’ rather restricted and limited.

*“So it is just like normal working. I cannot do what they do not want me to do there.”
(Hellen, Participant 3/ Rotterdam)*

In contrast, the “citizen garden” in Berlin is perceived by participants and organizers as well as by the neighbors as having an own piece of garden. Some participants have a feeling of ownership not only for their own patch but also for the entire park territory.

“Since I live across the street I am lucky and I come here every day as if it were my own garden. And therefore I care for it as well...” (Henner, Participant 3/ Berlin)

Says 76 year old Henner who has taken the sponsorship of the pond and who has been creating some conflict in the group by the claim he makes on this territory.

Many individual case stories and statements, such as the case story of Frank and Peer in Berlin in Chapter 4.1.5, clearly show the concept of “Hangouts & Home Territories” by Lofland (1998). “Home territories are areas where the regular participants have a relative freedom of behavior and a sense of intimacy and control over the area.” (Lyman & Scott 1967, quoted in Lofland 1998, p. 69). The garden obtains the meaning of a home territory in particular for those participants who actually spend most of their time there - that means those who are professional and paid participants or those who I called the ‘leading’ participants.

The finding that engagement is connected to place-making and the feeling of home is not supporting Blokland (2008b) who states that the feeling of home is not necessarily connected to the engagement in the community.

4.3.2 Sense of belonging and home – ‘to know where home is’

In the sense of individual meaning, place-making can be translated as a feeling of home, attachment, and belonging to a place. This place can be your own home, the neighborhood or work place, and I investigated if it can also be a community garden.

“Ja, actually I would say that [feel at home]. It feels ‘vertrouwt’ (familiar/ intimate) here. They are people who think quite the same and have the same thing to do, to make this here more beautiful. I feel like part of the group. I was incorporated well.” (Arina, Participant 7/ Rotterdam)

This says Arina who had just joined the Rotterdam project two month before and does not live in the neighborhood.

So for the participants who live in the neighborhood but also for the ones who do not a place is created where they have a feeling of belonging and home (spatially and socially). This combination of place bound and social ties I call place-making. I have already discussed this aspect in chapters 4.1 referring to “having a place to be” and also “the search for togetherness and community”.

Another dimension of place-making is the sense of ownership, which is enhanced by the investment of time and energy in a place. *“I like the neighborhood because I have put in a lot of my energy. I think if you do that then you like it.”* (Wilma, Participant 1/Rotterdam).

In summary, the sense of belonging to a place seems to have to do with putting your work in the garden, which is even stronger since the work in the case of gardening is place-bound. Planting, sowing and growing takes claim of the ground itself.

On the question if the garden feels like home and like his own place for him, Ronjon says: *„We identify with the fact that we have sown something, which we also give water and when somebody comes up we can say, look, we have made this.”* (Ronjon, Participant 8/ Berlin).¹⁴

This refers to the theories of place attachment based on Low & Altman (1992). They state that it is not necessarily the attachment to the place itself but “rather, it may be affective attachments to ideas, people, psychological states, past experiences, and culture that is crucial.” (p. 10). The feeling of belonging is constituted by the work people have invested in the place and in the plants. “And it is through the vehicle of particular environmental settings that these individual, group, and cultural processes are manifested.” (*ibid*, p. 10).

4.3.3 Appropriation of public space and parochialization

The place-making concept of belonging is connected to the public space dimension because the sense of “publicness” also greatly influences the sense of belonging. Perceiving the garden as one’s own space, to feel at home, to feel ownership collides with the notion of public space.

Likewise, Liesbeth, a Rotterdam community gardener, stresses the idea that public is opposed to feeling at home. *“But it is not like home, of course! Oh no. I think here it is an open, public space.”* (Liesbeth, Participant 6/ Rotterdam).

In the case of the community gardens we can talk about public or semi-public space that is appropriated by one group and thereby “parochialized” according to Lofland’s concept. So, community gardens are in the theoretical terms of Lofland (1998) not public ‘locales’ but parochial ‘locations’. For instance, the Wijktuin is very much a “protected place” (Organizer 9/ Rotterdam). It is physically quite insular and does not seem like you can enter. And it does not have the feel of a public space but rather a closed group (see perception of the neighbors, Chapter 4.4.1).

In Berlin, although the project seems to be more public and the association does a considerable effort to make outsiders feel that it is a public space, still many neighbors do not perceive it that way. Some of the participants are not too keen on more people coming to the park. *“They just leave their garbage here”* says one of the leading participants more or less jokingly.

Another aspect of the appropriation of space is the “practical and symbolic appropriation” of turning unused land into a garden (Rosol 2006, p.242). As shown above it is inherent to the gardening activity to create something and physically appropriate the space. This refers to

¹⁴ Original: “Wir identifizieren uns damit, dass wir da was angesät haben und das auch gießen und wenn jemand kommt, sagen können, hör mal, das haben wir gemacht.“

the theories on the active use of space and the creation of places through everyday life activities (e.g. (de Certeau 1988).

4.3.4 Meeting place

*„And now it can be kind of a meeting place again, where people can meet again like before”
(Frank, Participant 6/ Berlin)*

Both projects show clearly that the community gardens are functioning as a meeting place in terms of meeting and interacting with others in place (Massey 1994). A meeting place can be described as a place where people ‘bump into each other’, repeatedly and often times unintentionally until they might decide to meet intentionally (see Blokland 2008b). Furthermore, as described in Chapter 4.1 the freedom to come and go and the aspect of “doing things together” are important aspects of community gardens as meeting places.

“Now there is a place to communicate and to meet sometimes” (Neighbor 2 / Berlin).

In Berlin, the garden is a meeting place for the neighbors as well as it is for many participants and organizers (see Chapter 4.1.5 Search for togetherness and 4.2.6 Social connectedness).

“For most people it means merely to have their own garden here where they can grow flowers or vegetables. But others, those who come also to the garden on the joint work days, they have an interest in a place where they can meet and have an exchange with others. They want to really get out of their work routine and can do that by talking to a very different group of people than those whom they meet every day.” (Frank, Participant 6/ Berlin)

In Rotterdam, most surveyed neighbors also perceive the garden as a meeting place but just for the members and people who know about it. *“It could be a valuable meeting place. But there is limited access and it is not obvious”* (Neighbor 10/ Rotterdam). The neighboring public park (Wijkpark) is however perceived as a meeting place *“The park is more important for the neighborhood, the garden is no extra value.”* (Neighbor 11/ Rotterdam).

Of course it is noticeable when a public space is parochial, appropriated by a certain group. This can also create a certain place quality in the opinion of some people. In Berlin, a very distinctive place was created compared to what was there on the empty waste land before. It also “looks different” than a normal park that is taken care of by the public administration (Ronjon, Participant 8/ Berlin).

The taking over of one group in a place can also involve the **exclusion** of others. Like Ronjon, a Bürgergarten participant puts it: *„To some people this seems quite “bürgerlich” (conservative, middle-class). It is even called ‘Bürgergarten’.*” So to some groups, and he is referring to the young and more ‘alternative’ people living in the neighborhood, the garden project seems closed.

According to different theorists the success of a public space “lies not so much in the shared use of space with others, let alone in the ‘meeting’, but rather in the opportunities that urban proximity offers for a ‘shift’ of perspective.” (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001, p. 89) (See chapter 2.3.1).

The question is whether the “experience of otherness” can be achieved in the case study projects. This does not seem to hold true completely, since the ‘others’ are selected according certain criteria of group constellations and segregation patterns in the neighborhood itself, as a quote of a participant in Rotterdam shows.

“We have this often here in Netherlands that the idea is that everybody should be integrated and the neighborhood should be mixed. [...] But you see that the people look to go to their own place, own group. And they do not go to another club that they do not know. [...] Here in the park the Chinese group also has their own place, it is not really theirs but it is their own piece. That is their meeting place” (Arina, Participant 7/ Rotterdam)

So this rather shows exactly what is meant by the parochial or even home territories, that are “little bubbles of private space” according to Lofland (1998, p. 12) and other authors. A public space consists of multiple subspaces dominated by different groups rather than a fully shared use of the same space (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001, p. 89).

“But in the end everybody still wants to keep their own place or space.” (Arina, Participant 7/ Rotterdam)

So, public space is not a neutral meeting place for all, as Hajer & Reijndorp (2001) discuss. “Perhaps it is not parochialization that hinders the development of public domain, but in fact an overwrought idea of the public space as a neutral meeting place for all social groups regardless of class, ethnicity or lifestyle. [...] The paradox is that what many people experience as pleasant public space is in reality often dominated by a relatively homogeneous group.” (*ibid*, p. 85-88).

This certainly holds true for the community gardens researched in this thesis. According to Hajer and Reijndorp it is the experience of the parochial domains of others rather than one’s own group that creates the experience of a shared use of space or of perceiving a space as public. They go as far as stating that the dominance of a certain rather unfamiliar group produces public domain (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001, p. 88). On the other hand they concede that “parochial formation implies that certain groups or certain behaviour is excluded” (*ibid*, p. 89).

The solution for this dilemma might be as the quote of Hajer & Reijndorp (2001) shows: “Successful public domain requires a relatively strong group, without the position of that group leading to exclusion.” (p. 89). In the community gardens investigated I have seen approaches where some participants and organizers made an effort to prevent such exclusion.

4.3.5 Conclusion on place-making

In this chapter, the concept of place-making has been presented based on the empirical results as being comprised of a feeling engagement and a sense of belonging and home. Place-making processes also involve the appropriation of (public) space that can be connected to the notion of ‘parochialization’ and the aspect of meeting place.

This empirical conceptualization goes beyond the theoretical literature on place-making and place attachment presented in Chapter 2.3.2. My empirical concept of place-making is

broader and multi-faceted. It integrates various aspects from the theories reviewed such as the feeling of place attachment, appropriation of space, and parochialization. Besides, the role of the feeling of engagement for place-making is added. This interrelation was introduced in a quote by one participant “*To be involved and to engage - to know where your home is*” (Participant 2/ Berlin) and tested against the available data. The idea that engagement in a place is connected to an existent feeling of belonging to a place has been challenged by Blokland (2008a).

Conversely, I wanted to look at if feelings of place attachment are a prerequisite for the engagement in volunteer work in public space, like I have assumed earlier on the basis of my findings. This does not hold true, especially in the case of the Bürgergarten. The participants are quite different in their origins and backgrounds. Many do not live in the neighborhood and have just recently joined the project. Those still report to feel part of the place, denoting the garden. Also in the Wijktoin there are three participants who do not live in the neighborhood. So it seems that the appropriation aspect of place-making is important here, rather than the precondition of place attachment to the neighborhood. Blokland (2008a) states that for engagement it is important that people *want* to care about their neighborhood and that it seems worth for them (p. 156). This is mostly connected to the question if they want to stay there, what might be connected to economic reasons, safety etc. but also to a feeling of home. So according to Blokland, place-making does not make sense in a place where you do not want to belong. One could argue though that the feeling of belonging is not a condition but a process that can be built up through social contacts and ‘doing things’.

It has to be noted though that place-making could be (mis-)understood as a normative concept. That is, place-making processes would be seen as “good” for urban place quality and community development, per se. My research does not take this stance but uses the concept for analysis. I did not investigate the positive or negative effects of place-making processes on environmental quality or social connectedness on the neighborhood level. This would be another research study which would be difficult to measure since place-making would have to be clearly measurable (referring to the multi-dimensional and process character of the concept) and the effect on the neighborhood development would have to be clearly identifiable. It would also be interesting to further investigate the conditions of place-making for example, if it is bound to place characteristics such a parochialization, place-attachment to the neighborhood, and the feeling of ownership despite collective use.

Lofland (1998) argues for the “unrooted character” of social territories (p. 14). However I would say that community gardens are quite rooted social territories. They cannot just be moved around like the “mobile bubbles” Lofland talks about (see Chapter 2.3.2).

I also found that the community gardens as places are clearly parochial with all the excluding effects this might involve (see Lofland 1998) and there is little negotiation involved about the garden “belonging” to this group or another - it clearly belongs to the gardener group. This goes along with the conclusions of Blokland (2001): „We must acknowledge that the identities of places are articulations of relations that include some but exclude others (whether categorically or not), or relations in which the access to sites of place-making is at least unequally distributed” (p. 280).

4.4 Findings on differences between organizers, participants and surrounding neighbors

In the process of further elaborating the presented conceptual model, I analyze in the following how the three interviewed groups differ in their understanding of the gardens and the meanings they ascribe to the projects. In particular, I focus on their perception of the creation of social connectedness and place-making processes. This analysis corresponds to the research question on “*Do organizers, participants, and surrounding neighbors differ in their understandings of community garden projects, if so how & why?*”

In the previous chapters, I showed that the participants differ amongst each other in terms of the meanings they ascribe to the projects. In the following I would like to discuss how the perception of the surrounding neighbors differs from the participants’ understanding of the garden project. Moreover, I discuss how the organizers differ from the participant’s perspective.

4.4.1 The neighbors

In general it can be said that the neighbors do not differ much from the participants and organizers in their perception of the garden projects. It was surprising to me that the neighbors sometimes saw the same benefits and raised the same issues as the gardeners. To give an example: “they have a garden for themselves, have a job here, meet new friends” (Neighbor 5 / Rotterdam).

On the questions what the perceived benefits and important aspects would be for them to participate in the garden project, a typical answer was: “*to meet new people, the social aspect, and to do gardening*” (Neighbor 2 / Berlin). Besides, it was often mentioned that it is good for the children (in Berlin) and old people (in Rotterdam). As reason to participate in the project one neighbors in Rotterdam proposed: “*Gardening! To grow plants, talk about gardening. Just for gardening and growing, less for social contact*” (Neighbor 1 / Rotterdam). An important factor is to “*feel comfortable with the people, be able to communicate with them*” (Neighbor 10 / Rotterdam) and “*that the members invite people, talk to people*” (Neighbor 6 / Rotterdam).

These benefits perceived by the neighbors go along with the meanings ascribed by the participants and organizers.

Perception of a neighbor on the participant group: "They are people who have built something for themselves. Like that they also have work, occupation rather than sit at home ("den Trott zu Hause zu leben"), where they do not have work" (Neighbor 6 / Berlin).

"It is nice to have a place to sit, quietly and to meet people" (Neighbor 2/ Rotterdam).

Here the same meaning is described as in the category “Just be here” (see chapter 4.1.1) and to have a job and occupation (4.2.1). Another benefit is clearly seen in social connectedness, “a social circle, similar people to play sports together” (Neighbor 8 / Rotterdam). Likewise, a

young man said a benefit would be “to get ideas/advice for the future” (Neighbor 6 / Rotterdam) which possibly refers to meeting people in terms of bridging social capital.

So the understanding of the garden projects by the neighbors is very **similar** compared to the perceptions of the other interviewed groups.

However, the neighbors differ in their perception in both case study projects in the aspect that they do not perceive the community gardens as open to the public and as beneficial to the neighbors as they are intended to be by the organizers and participants.

“The neighbors do not benefit so much because they do not know about it, many people think it is private or think you have to pay for it.” (Neighbor 5/ Rotterdam)

The perception of the neighbors is described by one participant in Berlin according to what I have found in both projects:

“Many people think it is a private garden which is not public. They are not informed that there is the possibility for the neighbors to get involved here. However there are signs everywhere who say so and they could find out about it easily. Many are surprised that it is possible to participate and are interested. They always find it positive.” (Ronjon, Participant 8/ Berlin)

“The fact that there is a fence means to the people it is private” (Participant 8 /Berlin). This is the same case in Rotterdam. However, all three respondent groups agree that the fence is necessary and important to protect the garden from vandalism and dogs, and keep children from falling in the pond. Also they agree that there have to be rules and organization “It would not work if everybody could just do what he/she wants there.” (Neighbor 1/ Berlin).

“I never entered, it was not obvious if it is allowed or not to enter for everybody. Do not know if it is really public and my interest was not big enough to enter.” (Neighbor 1/ Berlin).

This is a common attitude among the neighbors. They think the project is a good thing but even most of the direct neighbors who have a view of the garden have never entered (in Berlin as well as in Rotterdam). In trying to explain why that is the case, I found that in Rotterdam it is clearly the problem that people do not know about the community garden. It is hidden and not perceived as open for everybody to use it. The same perception exists in Berlin although there it is much more open and signs clearly indicate the invitation to enter.

Therefore, it is clear that parochialization plays a role here. That is, the claims a certain group has made on the place are so strong that other people from the neighborhood do not feel comfortable to enter their space.

Benefits for the garden users

Another interesting finding was that the perception of the garden users (e.g. people who have their lunch break, do sports, or take their dog out) differs from the other neighbors. The actual users appreciate the garden in its ‘intended functions’. There is even a lot of evidence that they have built up social contacts through it (both in Berlin and Rotterdam).

Field note (30-07-08): “The man (Neighbor 13/ Berlin) wants to have more and closer contacts in the neighborhood. He thinks the park is a meeting place and uses it as such. ‘The

people you meet here bring other people, we make an appointment to meet for a social evening'. So through the park he met his neighbors whom he had not known before. In fact there are 7 people whom he meets almost every day now. This has developed only in the last few months (since he has gotten his puppy). They are all dog owners and all come regularly at 8 o'clock and meet. He says: "now they are friends, do things together".

Field note (30-07-08): "The dog owners seem to be a very open community; everybody who has a dog belongs to it. Even I feel welcomed, though I do not have a dog and have just been coming to the park regularly."

Especially for those dog owners the park has the function of a regular meeting place and a group of friends has been created within a short time period. This goes along with the findings of Kusenbach (2008) on the "significance of dogs for neighborhood- level interactions and integration" (p. 243).

So in the case of Berlin one can say that a meeting place and social capital was created by the garden project for those users, especially for the dog owners but also for a group of BMX bikers who made connections to the Youth Club and brought in different other groups from all over Berlin. In Rotterdam this holds true for the lunch break group and the visitors of the weekly tea terrace.

Why people do not participate

The objective of involving the perspective of the non-participants in this study was to also investigate why people do not participate in creating or using the community garden (despite reasons like having a garden already, having no time or interest in gardens, personal health reasons etc.).

"There are others who do not dare to come here because they think this is closed or so. Or that not everybody can come here. Or many just do not have an interest. For example my neighbor, he has no interest at all in gardens". (Peer, Participant 5/ Berlin)

So, next to the problem that people do not know about the project there is the issue that they feel it is not an open group of people. There is the apprehension that "it could be a closed community that does not welcome new people" (Neighbor 15/ Berlin).

"It is a closed group, yes. It is not possible to participate, to just come in and work here. It is just okay to visit."(Neighbor 5/ Rotterdam)

Certainly there are cultural and language barriers that keep people from participating. However, in my observations I found that in both projects the participants and organizers try to ease this issue for newcomers. Other obstacles that keep people from participating are the obligations connected to participation. "I feel it is free to come here but to participate you have to make arrangements and to become a member" (Neighbor 5/ Rotterdam)

"To me it is important that there should be enough benefit from the engagement. But I am afraid, it could be almost like a 'Schrebergarten' (allotment garden), with many rules, like you get punished if you do not take care of your patch. Then I rather stay on my balcony!" (Neighbor 5/ Berlin)

Nevertheless, I met several neighbors who actually were very interested and would like to participate. They said they would come there but the ones I could follow up just came once and then stayed away.

To conclude, as long as they know the garden a little, the surrounding neighbors do not differ greatly from the participants and organizers in the meaning they ascribe to the community gardens. This is a rather unexpected finding.

Important is that the neighbors do not feel free to use the gardens and that the groups seem closed to them. Thereby, the gardens are in fact not public but parochial places. Theorists talk about excluding practices, on the one hand (Blokland 2001) or about the encounter of 'the Other', on the other hand (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001, see chapter 2.3.1). I perceive it as a 'natural' process when people get involved in public space and appropriate it in their way, that there might be a threshold created for other people to use it. This should probably be overcome but maybe it is also in the interest of some people to keep it that way (see also Chapter 4.2.6 on social connectedness).

The other interesting and somehow contrasting finding to the parochialization argument is that I could observe the creation of social contacts and networks not for the neighbors who do not use the park but for the users especially in the Bürgergarten project but also in the Wijk tuin. So here we can say that there is encounter taking place in terms of the public domain (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001).

4.4.2 The organizers

Concerning the meanings of the garden project for the organizers, one important finding is that for them mainly ideological meanings are relevant, since they are often times less involved in the gardening activities themselves. For them it is important to create a place for everyone. The benefit for everyone and the recognition by the public is their driving motive.

For example, Frauke explains why she is engaged in the project:

“What I personally get from it is that a terrain full of garbage has been changed and a beautiful place was created. A place that can be used by everybody. In addition I get out of it how you can organize such a project [and meet delegations of the EU fund or the district mayor]. And of course good encounters and conversations with people and recognition. We get a lot of recognition for this project.” (Frauke, Organizer 04/ Berlin)

This reflects the personal benefits, the social connectedness created for the organizers and the place-making processes that are perceived by them.

Box 3: [Case story of Frauke & Wilma – perspective of the initiators]

Frauke says that it was very important for the Bürgergarten Laskerwiese project to have people like her who *“just wanted to have such a project here, less to garden here”* (Frauke, Organizer 4 / Berlin). For her it was clear from the beginning on that she did not initiate the project to use the garden later.

She explains her ideology as such that she wants to create a 'liveable urban environment'. *“To a 'liveable city' belong green open spaces which are not completely*

predetermined.” (Frauke). Those individual spaces to experiment and to try out things are provided in the neighborhood garden.

“Everything I do is to develop a better form of living that is more appropriate for me and thereby also to encourage people to try out for themselves, what is a good form for them. This is based on community relations (“Gemeinschaftsbezüge”) and does not mean to build a luxurious castle for myself and the rest I do not care about. I want to live as much as possible of what I think is meaningful!” (ibid)

So another belief based motives Frauke mentions is her ideology on alternative work organization which is reflected in the garden project, where people have an environment for work out of the employment market context.

“People who have a stable living environment will also be a benefit for society.” She states that if she wants this livability for herself then she also has to do something for it. *“I do this out of the concern of community work (for the common good)” - “a main part of our lives is being together”* (Frauke). She contributes something for the community which she is part of, so she perceives a personal and societal benefit at the same time. This goes along with what Wilma says about her involvement:

“I think what you do to make [your neighborhood] better is not for the public, far away outside or for the city council. It is for the people around you and for yourself. So I do not make that distinction between my own and the public. Because I am a part of it. But I also think that the government should respect a lot what people do.” (Wilma, Participant 1/ Rotterdam)

Most of the ideologies and activism especially in Rotterdam project go back to the 70’s when the neighborhood association was formed and the people who are still active today got involved.

“I think we have a history of being critical. But now it is not only protest but also thinking about the way that things will go better and do it.” (ibid)

Wilma and Frauke who represent the initiators of the projects have a lot of confidence, knowledge and networks to turn their ideas into doable projects that receive funding by the government.

“...if there is a good plan and there is a start with the plan, then the money will come. We live in a very rich country. There is a LOT of money they just spend on the wrong things so sometime you just have to get to the money.” (Wilma, Participant 1/ Rotterdam)

So this shows that the organizers use their social capital for example to access funding (see also Chapter 4.2.6). In addition, the organizers in both projects see their role in conflict solving and social work. Not only the professional organizers but also the participants, who have a leading function, do informal counseling and mediation work. *“I am really social worker there. Sometimes I have people at my desk crying. That is the most effort and time I spend with them.” (Organizer 9/ Rotterdam).*

„We have to constantly be there in the context and solve small and big problems” (Sabine, Participant 8/ Berlin)

The roles and functions of the organizers within the project group are discussed in more detail in Appendix D.

The professional organizers who belong to an institution differ from the unpaid organizers like Frauke, concerning the interest they have in the community garden. For the institutions it is important to have a functioning project with capable volunteers. So their concern is to create an environment for the volunteers that is motivating. As far as this is concerned, in the Wijktoin the top down approach is more important *“to give guidance and coordination”*, since the idea is that *“a volunteer does not want to carry the end-responsibility”* (Natalie, Organizer 9/ Rotterdam). By not holding them responsible and providing a structure for them Natalie, has doubts if they as community workers might *“spoil the neighbors and make them incapable.”* (Natalie, Organizer 9/ Rotterdam).

In contrast, in the Bürgergarten the idea of the organizers is to stay out as much as possible. *“The people can do a lot by themselves. We do not interfere.”* (Sabine, Organizer 7/ Berlin). Sabine’s idea is to convince people *“to talk with each other and to do things”*, to try themselves and bring in ideas. To her it is important to make activities meaningful and create an atmosphere of respect as well as give recognition. Her goal for the neighborhood and her institution is to bring people together and especially to involve young creative and more educated people. Therefore one of her new projects is to install a wireless internet access in the park. She is very happy that the garden project already attracts younger people. In general her motivation is to stay dynamic and constantly create new projects and ideas. Her personal satisfaction is *“when you experience that the concept you have thought of really works out” (ibid).*

To conclude, the organizers naturally have different roles and functions in the projects and thereby differ in their interests and in the benefits they gain from being part of the projects. Nevertheless, they do not differ in the meanings they ascribe to the garden projects, but the ideological meaning is emphasized.

Concerning their personal motivation for investing their social networks and resources, I found that they do gain personal benefits beyond *“the nice feeling of doing good”* (Blokland 2008a, p. 159). But the organizers and leading participants do not only act as individuals with private motives and preferences. They follow a certain ideology or belief. This can be related to what Blokland (2008a) calls *“the substantial rationality of progressive gentrifiers as a group”* (p. 160). Like Sabine said, the garden project is ‘a means to an end’, an end which is connected to cultural, moral or political values. In their language and stories I could find such *“quest for diversity and originality”* or a certain type of urban community which is according to Blokland an integral part of their identity (*ibid*, p. 160).

In my opinion, the presented individual cases raise the question if the *“progressive gentrifiers”* and community activists are a necessary and powerful driving force for neighborhood projects. At least, the observation in the two case study projects show that the organizers and their background are very important for the project’s success.

4.5 Findings on organizational features and different project approaches in Berlin and Rotterdam

The next level of my empirical analysis compares the approaches of the two community garden projects and investigates their organizational features with respect to the influences these have on the empirical concepts presented in the previous chapter and on creating an environment for place-making. So, subsequent to developing the conceptual model and incorporating the differences between the three respondent groups, it is also important to take into account the findings concerning the differences and similarities between the two case study projects. How are the projects organized and how does this connect to place-making?

I discuss the different project approaches and findings on the particular organizational characteristics that play a role concerning the conceptual model and relate to processes of place-making. Thereby, the context and the conditions of the projects are investigated, in particular with respect to the effect on meanings, personal benefits and place-making processes involved in the projects.

Figure 15: Overview on characteristics of projects



The case study projects turned out not to be significantly different in terms of the empirical concepts. In the analysis I found that in both projects all concepts and place-making processes could be found. So, the investigated community garden phenomena can be said to exist across the two cases and contexts. Nonetheless, the results show that there are a few differences. The most crucial ones are summarized in Table 3 below, concerning the scope and scale, clientele, project cycle, public/private accessibility, project design and approach.

Table 3: Comparison between the case study projects

Characteristic	Rotterdam Wijktuin 'Oude Westen'	Berlin Bürgergarten 'Laskerwiese'
Scope & scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • small project, fewer members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bigger in scale and number of members
Clientele	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • homogeneous - mostly older people, mainly women, many without a job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more heterogeneous concerning age, social mix, many without a stable job
Project cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • project has been started 16 years ago and has established organization & group dynamics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has been started recently (second year) and is still forming
Public / private accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • less public concerning the accessibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more accessible and public in set up
Project group open/closed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • open to join 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • open to join
Project design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • design implies clearly a communal / collective garden use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implies that people do care more about their own garden & less for the communal part
Project approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approach is more “top-down”, less self-organized and members have no “end responsibility” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • predominantly based on self-initiative and citizen responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • based on an implementing institution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • connected but not bound to an institution

These differences also influence the empirical research concepts such as the meanings ascribed and processes of place-making. The most important distinction is manifested in the project approaches that result in two different “models” of community gardening.

4.5.1 Two models of community gardens - volunteering vs. own garden

Based on the differences in the project design and approach the gardening activity is perceived differently by the participants, especially in terms of the role of their engagement. Accordingly, as presented in Chapter 4.3.1 there are different types of engagement found in the two case study projects.

The Wijktuin project is clearly a volunteering project in the classical sense. Here, the idea is that the volunteers come to work in the garden once or twice a week and get guidance by a full time professional. There is no complete self-organization and autonomy and no complete ‘freedom to do what you like and leave whenever you want’ (see Chapter 4.1.4).

“You know we have a boss, Natalie, I am just a worker there. [...] If we say 11 o'clock we cannot go 12 o'clock. But in my private garden, I go at three or four (laughs). It is a big difference.” (Hellen, Participant 3/ Rotterdam)

In contrast, in the Bürgergarten most participants consider the community garden project as an independent and communally organized place where they have their own garden. To have an own garden is a different incentive and motivation for engagement, in particular concerning the feeling of ownership and freedom.

“This is like the main price in the lottery that you get in a big city such a piece of land. It is like a small park. It is kind of like an own garden!” (Bernd, Participant / Berlin)

To work in one’s own garden is a very different engagement than being a volunteer in a public garden or park. This is reflected in the fact that in the Bürgergarten most members do not call their engagement volunteer work but stress the role of their individual patch. They still see their individual patch as part of a collective endeavor to maintain a public space, so their perception of their engagement is a combination of having an own garden and doing public works.

Here, the dimension of collective vs. individual is crucial. Although the Wijktuin is collective in its design, the participants have feelings of ownership for their neighborhood garden which is fostered by the fact that they are responsible individually for a part of the garden. A few of them though feel less attached to the place (“it is public – it is not for us”) but rather to the contact with the group. So the project designs in the two cases are “different but still similar” in the end since they both involve individual and collective aspects and feelings of ownership are created.

The difference in the type of engagement is also reflected in how the neighbors and visitors perceive the garden projects in terms of their participants. The Rotterdam project is seen as a project rather for senior citizens who do not work anymore and volunteer in the neighborhood garden. Whereas the Berlin project is perceived as a project for “young families, ambitious senior citizens, people who look for an alternative and self-initiative” (Neighbor 5 / Berlin).

These findings raise the issue of **different forms of civic engagement**. The empirical data shows that the form of civic engagement is an important topic in both projects for all respondent groups. In Berlin the involved actors see volunteering critically. They state that unpaid civic engagement needs different kinds of incentives, compensation, and recognition. If the gardening activity is fulfilling public service the conditions for voluntary work have to be improved.

“We actually do maintenance of public green spaces here” (Frauke, Organizer 4/ Berlin)

Since the role of voluntary work is changing nowadays in times of ‘public-private partnerships’ and ‘bottom-up urban development’ there needs to be a “new culture of recognition” according to Frauke, organizer of the Bürgergarten.

“Nowadays people work on a volunteer basis to get access to paid jobs.” (ibid)

The voluntary work encountered here is not the traditional engagement in leisure time in addition to a fully paid job. Many people see it as substitute while being in situations of under- or unemployment (see Chapter 4.2.1). Likewise, Mayer (2003) states that the new forms of civic engagement consist less of “well-to-do volunteers” in the traditional sense, but are about “activation/reinsertion (into the low-wage labor market) of the marginalized” (p. 111). In my analysis I found that through volunteer jobs, people hope to get contacts, activation, and skill training in order to enter the employment market again. Consequently, this aspect needs to be taken into account in volunteering projects and with the welfare-to-work sector.

“The tasks have to be meaningful, people have to feel needed and want to develop something independently and bring in their own ideas.” (Sabine, Organizer 7/ Berlin)

So it is interesting to look at my findings on community garden projects in terms of “contemporary forms of civic engagement and new types of urban activism” (Mayer 2003). The critique of civic engagement concerning the role of working for the public good mentioned by the participants and organizers of the Bürgergarten goes along with the perspective of Mayer (2003). According to the author, new forms of civic engagement are a result of “contemporary economic and political restructuring processes and newly emerging relationships between civil society, social movements and the state” (Mayer 2003, p. 117).

Taking into account this perspective one can argue that the types of community garden projects I investigated are not apolitical voluntary associations but both have an activist background and political ideas involved. These are interestingly not important for all participants but for a certain group of participants as well as the organizers. Although not being based on protest (anymore) they are still perceived as grassroots movements (see Chapter 4.4.2).

“I think we have a history of being critical. But now it is not only protest but also thinking about the way how things will go better and do it. Start doing it and see if you can find a way to get it round. I think that is a history of this neighborhood. To do things.” (Wilma, Participant 1/ Rotterdam)

A new quality is that those community-based organizations are partners of the municipality in the “implementation of service delivery, community management and welfare-to-work programs” (Mayer 2003, p. 118). At the same time – in the case of the Bürgergarten – they are part of small-scale grass-root initiatives like the “Gartenpiraten” (garden pirates) and other highly politicized movements (connected to Guerilla Gardening, ‘Right to the city’, ‘Reclaim the streets’). So, they deal with the appropriation of public space, social inclusion as well as new forms of work and the overcoming of precarious employment and marginalization. Thereby, they do have a political agenda and involve “cultural politics” (Blokland 2008a).

4.5.2 Public and open for everyone to join?

In both case study projects the question raises whether the garden project should be completely public in access and open for everybody to join.

Concerning accessibility, community gardens obviously do not have all the features of public space as compared to a public urban park but as stated before they can be considered 'parochial realms' (Lofland 1998).

"I have a double feeling about that: for me there is a fence around this. It is public, everybody can come in - but it is also a protected place." (Arina, Participant 7/ Rotterdam)

This is also due to the fact that the use of a garden is much more specifically defined than of a public park. It is created and maintained by one group to be (partially) accessible to the public. So, neither the accessibility criterion for public space applies completely (see Hajer & Reijndorp, 2001, p. 89), nor does the diversity criterion with respect to the groups that share the place (see Chapter 4.3.1). In the community gardens investigated a particular, differentiated definition of the space seems to be salient:

"It is public. But most of all things it is open, that means visible for everybody, everybody can walk through, can come in and look. You can also touch and taste, nobody has anything against that." (Gerlinde, Participant 1/ Berlin)

So, according to the participants, everybody can come in "but..." there are semi-private areas, such as certain garden facilities, the hut, the personal garden patch, and the pond. There are also explicit rules and implicitly communicated regulations such as that in the Rotterdam garden children are not allowed to enter unattended and the terraces in both cases are obviously made for the gardeners alone whereas the banks are for public use.

"This part is not public (the patches and the pond). Over there it is public and everybody can enter... Everybody should understand by himself that this was created by the neighbors' initiative and that everybody is very welcome but..." (Henner, Participant 3/ Berlin)

Nevertheless, in Berlin participants and organizers stress that the place should be open for everybody to join and completely public in access. They think that the spatial design and "appearance of the estate should evoke that the people deal with it respectfully and appropriately" (Frauke, Organizer 4/ Berlin). Likewise, they managed to bring vandalism down to a minimum, also due to the involvement of close neighbors and the permanent presence of "Peer and his group".

"Everybody should benefit from it. [...]Then, everybody will also take care of it more." (Frank, Participant 6/ Berlin)

However, the review of the neighbor survey shows that both projects are not generally perceived to be inviting, open and for everybody in the neighborhood (see Chapter 4.4.1). Especially in the Wijktuin inviting signs are missing and there is neither clarity on how one could join the project nor are there clear incentives put forward to do so. So, it seems to be decisive which message is given to come in and to join as well as which motivating factors are communicated to attract newcomers.

“Free spaces for the individual” & “carrots to attract rabbits”¹⁵

In order to make the project attractive for participants *“you have to provide resources”* (Organizer 7/ Berlin). This is somewhat surprising as one would think that an open free space to do gardening would be enough, but in the following it will become obvious that a lot more factors play a role to make a community garden attractive and functioning.¹⁶

As one incentive, Frauke explains, you have to take into account that there should be enough individual space for the needs and interests of the members. *“There as to be a balance between individual and community”* (Frauke, Organizer 4/ Berlin). This space and personal benefit is seen in the provision of an own patch.

“If the people have a personal benefit they are much more willing to come here. There has to be an incentive. Here that is that they pay 10 Euro per year and can grow their own vegetable.” (Gerlinde, Participant 2 / Berlin)

Gerlinde, the leading participant of the Bürgergarten, brings in the idea of a stick and carrot policy by the government (*“mit Speck fängt man Mäuse”*) to attract people with some stimulus to make them work on public duties - which sounds almost like ‘leading them down the garden path’. Or rather it means that everybody has to perceive a personally relevant benefit in order to get involved in a public space project. As described, in the Rotterdam project, the carrots as well as the sticks are not clearly visible and communicated. There, the focus lies on the individual benefits such as healing, access to gardening and nature, fulfilling personal ideology, having a job and occupation, and social connectedness (see Chapter 4.2).

Mix of activities and users

It is part of the concept of both garden projects that not only the gardeners but also other intended users should be able to benefit from it. In the Bürgergarten the park users can play football or do BMX biking on the sports field, the dog owners actively use the park, and people come to sit and have lunch. Here, the approach is to incorporate other uses and diverse groups. This aspect is different in the Rotterdam project. There the emphasis lies on offering a tea terrace especially for the neighboring elderly home as well as incorporating children groups and offering educational activities.

So, in order to create integration with the neighborhood community, in Berlin the idea is to establish a mix of use in the garden.¹⁷ In the Wijktoin there are not different functions incorporated but they attempt to have different activities for different age groups: for children and for old people, especially people from the adjacent elderly home. Children as important beneficiaries of the garden projects are mentioned by all respondent groups.

¹⁵ Original: *“Individuelle Spielräume”*, *“Mit Speck fängt man Mäuse”*

¹⁶ This goes along with research findings on different levels of engagement in public vs. private space. According to Rosol (2006, p. 4) there is research (e.g. Homann et al. 2002 and Selle 1993) showing that the motivation to take responsibility for private spaces is higher than for collectively used public spaces.

¹⁷ This is according to many authors such as Jacobs (1961/1993) who stress that a quality public urban space needs differentiated uses and programs (see Chapter 2).

Teaching children about nature and planting is implemented through educational projects in the Wijktoin. In Berlin the approach is to bring in entire families.

In addition, organizing events in the garden is a way to create social connectedness and more integration with the neighborhood.

“Leisure events! Here people of different milieus could come together, that is not the case with many other event venues around. Such a garden can attract a range of different groups of people.” (Ronjon, Participant 8/ Berlin)

The findings show that acceptance in the neighborhood is important. *“Even because they can keep an eye on this. If you incorporate them and if they see this as THEIR space.” (Petra, Participant 1/ Berlin)*. According to the organizers, the project should be ‘owned’ and accepted by the neighborhood and not imposed from an outside group.

“You have to take account the needs of the place in a respectful way. You cannot say ‘now we are coming and imposing this nice thing on you dear people’. Instead you have to develop something that makes sense and you also have to communicate why you are doing it and how and who can participate. Then you will get a lot back.” (Sabine, Organizer 7/ Berlin)

It is stressed by the respondents in Berlin that the social mix of users is crucial. This idea goes along with the theories on social capital creation stating that such projects should be mixed in terms of the potential for bridging social capital (see Chapter 2.3.3).

“Being intercultural but without forcing it.” (Henner, Participant 3/ Berlin)

The intercultural aspect is, by definition, very important in community garden projects: Usually, funding and recognition is based on the ethnic-cultural mix in the project. However, I found in the Berlin case study project that the mix of different ethnicities (expected from a so-called “intercultural garden”) is less significant than the social mix (see Chapter 4.2.6). As described this is fostered organizationally by a mix of different activities and, connected to that, age groups.

“We have learned that you cannot create interculturality out of nothing („nicht aus dem Boden stampfen“), it has to grow.” (Sabine, Organizer 7/ Berlin)

Similarly to the experience from Berlin concerning intercultural integration that cannot be forced, the people from the multi-cultural neighborhood in Rotterdam seem to be parted on the issue: They are positive about it but see a lot difficulties concerned.

“I would like to see this in every neighborhood, to see people getting together again. But in practice I see that it does not really work.” (Arina, Participant 7 / Rotterdam)

Blokland (2008a) stresses the conflicts concerning community dynamics and social capital in a mixed neighborhood. Here the issue is that “community” is not a homogeneous interest group and exclusion and conflicts in public space are at hand.

“We have this often here in Netherlands that the idea is that everybody should be integrated and the neighborhood should be mixed. But in the end all people just look for their own group again. There are so many different cultures in this neighborhood. But you see

that the people want to go to their own place, own group. And they do not go to another 'club' that they do not know.” (ibid)

So it seems that in fact a great part of the people in a neighborhood do not want to mix and want to keep their “parochial realm territory” for their own group (Lofland 1998).

“I rather think that people really want to be with their own group with the same background, their own culture, language and thinking. And I think this is fair, too. So actually in this park we would need to have 6 community gardens - for every group another garden. That would work well. I think only then you would get the people together and then make one big community out of it. But in the end everybody still wants to keep their own place or space.” (ibid)

What is described here is the issue of the parochial realms that can be in some cases even “bubbles of home territory” in public spaces (Lofland 1998, p. 13). This can be observed in the park adjacent to the Wijktoin and in many other urban parks. In a community garden, however, it is generally not intended to create those pieces of private territories. The intention is to create one big ‘mixed homey bubble’ or an even more ‘transcendent’ place, parochial in its type. Here the question arises, if there are organizational features that enable a project to integrate different cultural and social groups in one place. Thereby, a place of encounter that involves entering the “parochial domains of ‘others’” could be created (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001, p. 88).

4.5.3 Cooperation and partnership

A different organizational aspect of the case study projects is that they reveal ‘best learning practices’ for citizen involvement in public space. The projects show two different kinds of partnerships: between citizens and local government in Berlin, or between citizens and the neighborhood management institution (“Opbouwwerk”) in Rotterdam, where there is no direct link between the local government and the community garden project but an intermediary organization is in place. In the Bürgergarten it is rather a grass-roots model where all management is done by volunteers, while in the Wijktoin there is a more institutionalized set up with a professional coordination (see additional analysis on roles and functions in Appendix D). In both cases there needs to be the capacity to connect with the public administration institutions. Those in return have to be committed and flexible to work together with a community garden association.

The Berlin project is a prominent example for civil society participation in public space and for a direct cooperation with municipal departments. For Sabine, one of the initiators, an important recipe for the so far successful cooperation was that different local actors (neighborhood based organizations and active individuals) joined together in the partnership with the municipality. The decisive factor was though that the district of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg is especially open for citizen involvement, sustainability issues and green space (the mayor, Dr. Schulz, is from the Green Party and strongly supports the project). The government experiments with giving away responsibilities. I observed that a great part of

decision-making and management authority is given to citizen also in other projects (e.g. “Wriezener Freiraum Labor”, “brach und danach”).¹⁸

“We are in a good district, who has let us develop this” (Sabine, Organizer 7/ Berlin). There was on many levels a lot of personal engagement to realize the garden project and there were the funding opportunities with Urban II (see also Chapter 3.3.1). However, with regards to the long time those projects need to develop, they require a stable and long-term political support and funding.

Another success factor, also in the Rotterdam project, is that there have been professionals (paid or unpaid) as well as volunteers involved and that there are welfare-to-work programs supporting.

“We need volunteering, we need welfare-to-work jobs (“den zweiten Arbeitsmarkt”) and we need networks in the neighborhood” (Sabine, Organizer 7/ Berlin)

One interesting lesson learned on the problems that might be encountered concerning citizen involvement in public space was mentioned by Frauke. For her the biggest obstacle is the different functioning of a municipal administration compared to a self-organized grassroots project.

“Such an association really works differently than a municipal administration. Two universes clash here.” (Frauke, Organizer 4/ Berlin)

An administration is usually characterized by time-consuming bureaucratic procedures and limited flexibility. Therefore, it often took months until the next steps could happen if they were depending on municipal regulations.

“The people here in the garden sometimes really do not understand what the reasons are and why they cannot just do something. In the department (district) on the other hand, they have to consider so many regulations. When they come here to the garden, it becomes clear why it is not their world at all. Their work is so different compared to the social processes and the distributions of task here in the project.” (ibid)

This agrees with the research of Jamison (2005) on conflicting approaches in collectivist and bureaucratic management cultures of governments and the community garden movements. “A comparison of how each described the benefits of urban gardening and structured the gardening experience for participants show serious underlying differences between these organizational cultures and a source of potential bureaucratic/collectivist conflict” (Jamison 2005, p. 473). In his broad research he found that although government agencies supported the garden projects, the garden collectives and the bureaucracies “had different meanings for what appeared to be the same experience.” “Collectives and bureaucracies differ not only in structure and values, but in how they interpret the social world and engage in actions based on quite different themes, symbols, and meanings.” (Jamison 2005, p. 473).

Especially in the Berlin case it becomes clear that in a partnership between local government and community garden project group there are different understandings and interests to be

¹⁸ These two projects I have visited, interviewed and documented.

considered. This interesting topic is not in the centre of my research and cannot be discussed here in detail.

4.5.4 Conclusion on organizational features and project approaches

The analysis of the differences between the project approaches of the two case study projects has shown that there are different models of engagement concerning voluntary work. Here the notion of new forms of civic engagement plays a role according to Mayer (2003).

Concerning the project organization, the Wijktoin project is more collective but less public in access and less open in its perception by the neighbors. Whereas the Bürgergarten has individual patches which is very important for the engagement motivation and can therefore be described as more individual. At the same time the latter is more public in access and more open and heterogeneous in its perception.

The findings indicate that the features of individual and collective can be combined differently with public and non-public accessibility and openness of the project. Applying this to different forms of gardening projects means: If one would combine the individual uses with non-public access it would not be considered a community garden anymore. Likewise, if collective use alone would be combined with complete publicness, there would be no ground for feelings of ownership and belonging, which are important in terms of place-making and motivation.

So, I found that both case study projects are balanced in their own way which has the effect that both involve feelings of belonging and ownership. This is reflected in the fact that both show parochialization features. In the rather collective Wijktoin project where most of the participants possibly should feel less ownership for the garden, they still reveal a strong sense of engagement and belonging which is also linked to their social connectedness. In the completely public Bürgergarten feelings of belonging are created due the “free spaces for the individual”, the own garden patches and also due to the social ties and meeting possibilities in the place.

How does this relate to place-making processes? In both scenarios place making exists and the participants and organizers reveal a sense of engagement and belonging. Besides, the appropriation of space and meeting in place plays a role. In the garden that is collectively used there do not seem to exist less spatial and social ties and less place attachment than in the garden project with the individual plots. So the collective vs. individual dimension is not crucial neither is the dimension of public access. The hypothesis that can be derived from the findings is that the balance of those dimensions is important to create a sense of belonging and thereby place-making processes.

These are merely assumptions based on two individual cases which do not permit generalization. Place-making is difficult to measure (due to the multi-dimensional and process character of the concept) but it would be interesting to investigate if it is always connected to less public access and parochial places and if a feeling of *ownership* is necessary (see Chapter 4.3).

In summary, there is a difference in how the projects are designed (public/private; collective/individual) and which approach they take to the project activity itself (volunteering vs. own garden). Nevertheless, place-making processes exist in both settings and those factors do not seem to be most important for place-making to occur. Rather, I discovered that in both projects the *central meanings* are important: ‘to have a place to be, to engage in joint activities, to create something, to be free to leave and to search for togetherness and community’. Moreover, in the results it became clear that incentives for engagement and personal benefits for the individual are important to be considered in the project design.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations

The aim of this thesis was to explore the meanings and perceptions of community garden projects for the participating and non-participating actors. The research, based on two case studies, investigated the question: *Which social processes and project features make the community gardens become understood by the organizers, participants, and surrounding neighbors as projects that foster processes of place-making and social connectedness?* The variety of findings concerned has been presented in detail, incorporating the theoretical literature, and will be summarized and discussed briefly.

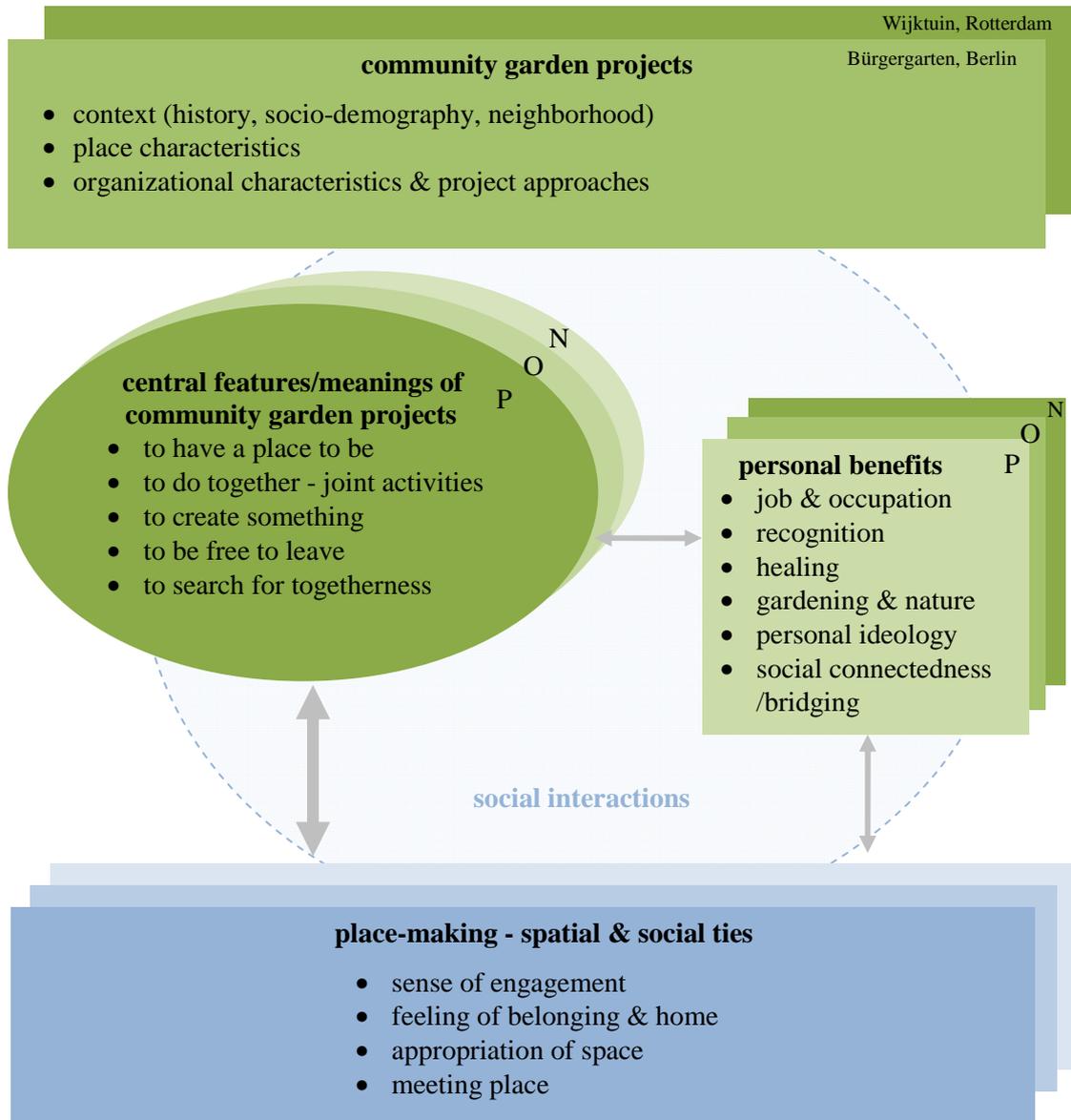
In addition to the written academic part, this thesis is complemented by the research film “Urban green - A study on community garden projects in Berlin and Rotterdam” which can be found in the appendix. The film document illustrates the central concepts as derived from the empirical research and gives an impression of the original empirical data.

5.1 Conclusions on the conceptual model

Chapter 4 has presented the findings from the empirical research on the perceptions of the two community garden projects by the participants, organizers and surrounding neighbors. The results were presented within a conceptual model that integrates all empirical concepts and is ‘grounded’ in the empirical data (see Figure 16).

The conceptual model can be used as tool to understand and analyze community garden projects and the assessment of the involvement in public space projects in general. The empirical results and the model can also be an instrument for the conceptual planning of new projects, in particular with regards to place-making processes, which are, as result of my research, a main aspect of community garden projects.

Figure 16: Final conceptual model



(Note: P = Participants, O = Organizers, N = Neighbors)

The conceptual model is multidimensional; it incorporates the context and organization of each project and the differentiation in respondent groups. It consists of three interrelated elements: the cross-cutting meanings or central features of the community garden projects, the specific personal benefits gained from the community garden projects and the overall central concept of place-making. Social interactions play a role in all central categories and, as indicated in the graphic, can be seen as integrating element.¹⁹

¹⁹ So, compared to the pre-empirical ‘conceptual framework’ (Chapter 2.2), the concepts were empirically redefined in answering the central research question of this thesis. The model adds significant elements and the relationships between the concepts were clarified in the investigation.

My main research question led to five *central features or meanings of the community garden projects* that form the core of the conceptual model : ‘to have a place to be’, ‘engage in joint activities’, ‘to create something’, ‘to be free to leave and to do what you like’ and ‘to search for togetherness and community’. They constitute the cross-cutting features of the two case study projects in the perception of the different respondent groups. The central features are interrelated and strongly linked to the other categories in the model. They are constituents of a sense of engagement and belonging, and are connected to the appropriation of space as well as to the category of meeting place which comprise the central concept of place-making.

Besides these cross-cutting meanings I identified *personal benefits* gained from the participation in the garden projects (see Figure 16) which explain the motivation for the engagement in community garden projects. They are also perceived by the interviewed neighbors. The personal benefits are related to the individual situation of a respondent and have the quality of “giving a hold” in common (see Chapter 4.2.7). Besides the striving for urban green and having a garden, the creation of social connectedness with respect to bridging social capital is a crucial element in the community garden projects.

The central meanings of the community gardens as well as the personal benefits are linked *to place-making - the central concept* of my research findings. On the basis of the empirical analysis, place-making is defined as comprising several interrelated categories: a sense of engagement, the feeling of belonging, the physical appropriation of space, and the quality of a social meeting place. In this broad concept it is reflected that place-making consists of spatial and social ties as well as involves the emotional aspect of attachment to place and action-orientated component of creation and appropriation. These aspects of place-making can be observed in both garden projects and seem to be inherent to community gardening.

In reference to the literature, community gardens have been analyzed as places that are articulations of social relationships. The theoretical discourse on the ‘making of places’ is incorporated in the discussion of the empirical place-making concept. In the theoretical terms of Lofland, community gardens are not public spaces but “parochial realm territories” (Lofland 1998). They are not neutral meeting places for everybody as Hajer & Reijndorp (2001) discuss. Even if there is complete public access given, like in the Bürgergarten Laskerwiese, it is shown that the participants and non-participating neighbors perceive the garden significantly as parochial. So community garden projects can be understood as ‘socially produced places’ and people differ in their “access to sites of place-making” (Blokland 2001, p. 280). This is related to the fact that there is a specific use in a garden compared to an urban park and that a certain defined group of people ‘takes over’ a public space. The appropriation implies that there is always an excluding element for non-participants who feel like entering the “parochial” or “home territories” of others (Lofland 1998). This does not only hold true for the access to the place but also for the social connectedness created in the project. Here it became obvious that some people

benefit differently from the creation of social contacts and networks than others ('exclusionary effects' see Chapter 4.2.6).

Place-making as defined in this thesis turned out to be an applicable and theoretically useful concept for the analysis of community gardens and of community engagement in public space projects in general. The term can be found frequently in theoretical and non-academic literature but is usually not systematically defined as concept. Therefore, I believe that my theoretical and empirically grounded analysis can contribute to the discourse on place-making.

Conclusion on differences between respondent groups

The conceptual model differentiates between the perception of the three respondent groups. I analyzed how the participants, organizers and surrounding neighbors differ in their understanding of the gardens and concerning the meanings they ascribe to the projects. Remarkably, the findings show that the three different groups do not differ greatly in their perceptions of the community garden projects.

The surrounding neighbors see similar meanings in the projects as the organizers and participants. However, the neighbors do not perceive the community gardens as publicly accessible and open for use in contrast to the organizers and participants who claim that the garden is public and open to everyone. Many neighbors, especially in Rotterdam, do not know the garden, or if they have some knowledge about it, they never have entered or used it. This is due to the 'parochialization threshold' but also to the fact that the garden in Rotterdam is very much hidden from the public (Chapter 4.4.1). The reasons why the interviewed neighbors do not want to participate in the garden project are related to this feeling of being unacquainted. Besides, the preoccupations on the openness of the project group and the tasks and duties connected to being part of such a project were identified to be hindering reasons.

On the other hand, I found that neighbors who actually use the garden, such as people who regularly walk their dogs there (in Berlin) or who always spend their lunch break there (in Rotterdam), perceive it as meeting place. Social contacts and networks are created for a considerable number of garden users. This is due to the organizational approach of both case study projects, to aim at mixed project groups and to incorporate other different user groups by a mix of functions (area for sports, dogs) and activities (for elderly and children) within the project design.

The meanings the organizers ascribe to the community garden projects correspond with the perception of the participants. According to their different roles and functions, their gained benefits go beyond personal interests but concern the fulfillment of a personal ideology related to the creation of a quality public space, to 'doing something for the common good' and similar motives. The organizers and leading participants play an important role in investing their social capital, skills and knowledge in the projects. Moreover, for them place-making processes are

fundamental; they have a strong feeling of engagement and sense of belonging to the community garden project.

Conclusion on the organizational features and the different project approaches

The two community garden projects have been analyzed concerning their contexts, organizational characteristics and project approaches, focusing on how these features relate to the empirical concepts.

Remarkably both projects reveal the same central meanings and place-making processes, in spite of certain differences in project approaches and designs (Chapter 4.5). The projects differ mainly concerning the dimension of doing voluntary work vs. working in one's own garden. In the Wijk tuin, the participants perceive their engagement as voluntary work in a communal public garden project whereas in the Bürgergarten the participants clearly see their benefit in having an own garden within a collective setting. In both projects there is a strong sense of engagement and belonging which is also linked to social connectedness. This finding has been discussed concerning the dimensions of public accessibility and collective vs. individual project design. The balance of those project characteristics has been identified as crucial for the feelings of belonging and ownership (Chapter 4.5.4). So the analysis shows that the organizational characteristics of the two case study projects are advantageous for the initiation of place-making processes, closely connected to the central meanings presented in the conceptual model.

The research findings revealed that another category is crucial in the case study projects: the role of volunteer work and the concept of civic engagement. The role of voluntary work is changing in times of a declining welfare state and with respect to 'public-private partnerships' and 'bottom-up urban development'. This has been analyzed by Mayer (2003) who discusses "new forms of civic engagement" which are less motivated by the traditional idea of volunteering but are driven by the "activation and reinsertion (into the low-wage labor market) of the marginalized" (p. 111). At the same time, community garden projects, especially in the Berlin case, can be seen as examples of community-based urban initiatives that have a social and political agenda (Chapter 4.5).

It was shown that unpaid engagement in fulfilling public tasks needs different kinds of incentives and benefits for the individual. Moreover, the recognition of the community gardeners as partners in maintaining public space and as workers engaging in alternative forms of work and civic engagement is vital.

The two case studies show how civil society participation in public space and cooperation with municipal departments can work on condition of different kinds of partnership between local government and citizens in Berlin or between neighborhood management ("Opbouwwerk") and citizen in Rotterdam. Concluding from the findings on project approaches especially in the Berlin case, it turned out that managing a park in partnership between the local district government and a citizen association can be an interesting and functioning model. The political support as it exists to a high degree in the Berlin case is crucial. It depends on the culture of

the local government which in Berlin reveals an unusual openness for citizen involvement not only from the political but also the administrative side. I observed that a great part of decision-making and management authority is given to the citizen.

There have to be policies and legal frameworks for the government-citizen partnerships. Remarkable is the finding that the different cultures and working patterns of government institutions and grassroots projects can be an obstacle that has to be overcome in a mutual learning process. So based on the experience with community garden projects partnership models, procedures, support and funding structures can be identified in future research that can be learning practices for the implementation of socially and spatially oriented urban community projects.²⁰

5.2 Conclusions on methodology and research approach

Reflecting on the research design and methods applied it can be said that the research approach was appropriate to the topic. As discussed in detail in Chapter 3.6 different considerations were incorporated to increase the quality of the data material concerning reliability and validity. The data analysis approach was consistent with the data material and the research aims and questions. The ‘circular procedures’ of data analysis lead to an empirically grounded theory construction (see Chapter 3.5). In future research gradual generalization of this theory could be reached.²¹

The most important methodological lessons learned derive from my decision to use film as research method and as documentation tool, based on an ethnographical film-making approach (see film document in Appendix). It was an experiment to find out whether it is viable to use the technology to record the data and make the process transparent and in addition to make a research film which enables to communicate the results in a vivid manner to a broader non-academic public, such as practitioners in urban development and management or, not least, the involved persons themselves.

In my opinion this experiment worked very well. According to my experience it is highly recommendable to use digital video as recording device and then later edit the material based on the transcriptions and data analysis into an audio-visual document. Though, the time and resources consumed were very high (partly due to the fact that it was a ‘pilot endeavor’ at least in my own field of urban development combined with socio-psychological research). In particular, the inclusion of the review process for editing in the qualitative data analysis and then deploying the final conceptual model as editing guide seems to be a quite innovative approach to film as research method (and even to research as film-making method).

²⁰ For a detailed assessment on different approaches to garden projects and a practical guide for implementing community garden projects see Rosol (2006). For a practitioner view to a broader range of projects in public space see Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung (2007a).

²¹ The idea is to get from a “grounded or substantive” theory specific to a certain context and field, to a “formal grounded theory” that is generalizable, universal and “not limited in time and space” (Lamnek 1993, pp. 113 & 122).

The film document can be used as an accompanying and complementing work to an academic thesis but also as a standing alone documentary. As result there can be valuable insights into complex topics that give a comprehensive picture especially in the field of research on urban and social issues. Thereby, context and multi-dimensionality, and a holistic perspective on the researched reality can be incorporated.

This described approach can be used in future research and film-making projects alike. The advantage of the reverse *incorporating research methods in film-making* can be seen in working with an elaborated conceptual approach based on pre-field studies and literature reviews as well as in the use of a carefully prepared methodological design. Mainly, the research procedures of ethnographic field notes, research diary, exact transcriptions, and coding schemes resulting in a conceptual analysis could enrich documentary film-making significantly.

5.3 Conclusion and outlook on the application of the findings in future research and practice

The lessons learned from my findings concern the application of the conceptual model to future research and the implications for urban development practice.

The conceptual model as theoretical approach can be applied to the practical field of community gardens. It should be further refined in different urban garden projects, as listed in Table 1 (Chapter 1) and contexts by future research. I think it is also applicable beyond urban gardens in the analysis of different community-based open space projects. It would also be interesting to investigate how the conceptual model can contribute to explain community involvement in the creation of public or semi-public urban spaces in general. In this respect, different kinds of community projects (e.g. youth projects) and urban initiatives (e.g. protest based urban initiatives), where spatial and social ties are important, could be investigated concerning place-making processes. Future research should include the concept of civic engagement and the role of partnerships between citizen and local governments in public space projects.

My findings show that community gardens and the involved place-making processes have a potential for urban development in practice. They are examples of bottom-up or participatory urban development practices and have implications for neighborhood development and partnerships between government and civil society organizations. Empty land is upgraded and used and a contribution is done for enhancing urban environmental quality and for creating more green spaces in the city.

Even in marginalized low income neighborhoods where the potential for place-making is usually not given such garden projects can be viable urban interventions enhancing engagement of civil society actors. In future research I would like to further explore the potential of public space and community projects for making 'neglected' or 'unplanned' urban settlements more liveable by fostering social and spatial ties.

Likewise, the creation of community spaces with citizen involvement should also be investigated in urban settlements in so-called 'developing countries' (also with respect to urban gardening). In my studies and my work abroad I learned that approaches to livable cities connected to open public space are not really in the focus of municipalities in developing countries. But there is a need of community spaces especially in the marginalized low-income settlements and there is little research about it. Here the ideas of community gardens, Guerilla Gardens and urban agriculture which exist all over the world (see Chapter 1) can be further explored for their potentials in different urban contexts. Such a research can give interesting impulses for sustainable urban development practices and for the creation of urban green involving community engagement and self-organizing and thereby re-creating public realm and meeting places in a neighborhood.

Moreover it would be interesting to investigate community-based movements in general in terms of their involvement in creating livable neighborhoods. My findings have illustrated that societal and structural transformation in European cities mostly concerned with post-industrialization has created new forms of urban living that require self-organization, new types of occupation and social networks. Thus, the traditional idea of civic engagement becomes replaced by a much more diverse and complex set of motives on why people get involved in community projects. I suppose that also in non-European, industrialized and rapidly urbanizing cities similar motives for community engagement exist as well as the need for creating livable neighborhoods with community spaces.

As an outlook for research and practice I think it is vital to take into account that the place-making concept shows the transition of the notion of place as consumer good to place as actively produced by its users. This perspective is important for the urban development and urban design practice. In this way, social science research can contribute significantly to the understanding of urban places produced by its inhabitants, taking into account their social relations, actions and meaning production.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Interview guideline

Interview guideline for participants and organizers of community garden project

By Christina Liesegang, IHS Rotterdam

Introduction to interview

This interview is part of my research work, which aims at gaining an understanding of community garden projects and about the people that are involved in these projects. I focus on this gardening project and make filmed interviews with all the participants, the organizers and some of the surrounding neighbours. I am interested in your personal stories and experiences with this garden and with the group. I want to know for example why it is important for you to participate.

The interview will be recorded on film. I use film instead of sound recording since I think it gives a more comprehensive and real picture of entire situation. Also, I want to document the research on film so you also can have the material for your project or for yourself. So I do not only produce a work on paper but a small research film. The film will hopefully serve to show other people in other countries and projects the example of different gardening projects.

I assure that the information from the interview will be treated confidentially and the results will be used solely for the purposes of this academic research. I am asking for your permission to publish some of the material.

In the Interview we will ask different questions on all aspects of your life but mainly concerning the community gardening project. It will take approximately 1,5 hours.

If you do not mind, I would like to record the interview from now on.

Thank you very much for your time, interest and cooperation!

Overview personal data

Basic information	Fill in:		
Date of interview	2008		
Interviewee typ / No.	participant / organizer	No.	
Name of respondent			
Age			
Country of origin / Language			
Sex of respondent	Male	Female	
Duration (Country/City/NB)			
Employment	Unemployed	Part-time	Full
Place of employment /Position			
Education			
Marital status			
Living with...			
Children			
Type of housing			
Address of respondent			

Opening questions:

What can you tell me about the garden, how did it come about? (organizer)

Please tell me *your story* with this garden, how did you end up here? (participant & organizer)

I. General Questions: Project characteristics (descriptive & empirical)

1. Who are the participants and organizers?

Who is forming the group/"community" of the project?

- Who are the participants?
- How did you get together?

Inclusion:

- Who can participate? What kind of people can take part in the project?

Personal engagement in project:

- Since when did you join the project and why?
- How often do you come here (hrs per week)? How often do the others come here?

Social roles:

- What, would you say, is your role?

2. How is the project formally organized?

Initiation:

- Why was the project created (stimulus)? By whom?
- What were the resources used and the obstacles you met?

- Who else is involved in the project, which institutions?
- Who was/is supporting the project on the political level/in the local government? (mainly ask organizers)

Formal vs. informal: (formal responsibilities, functions/roles, Financing?)

- Who is organizing the project?
- Would you say the participants organize most of it themselves?
- Is there a leader, chairperson?
- How is the project financed? (mainly ask organizers)

Public vs. non-public:

- What are the opening hours? Who has access and when?
- Would you like to have the project more open or more closed to the public?

3. What kind of place/space?

Do you live in the neighborhood?

Place quality: perception of neighborhood and public open spaces in general:

- What would you say are the best things about living in this neighborhood? / What do you like best about your neighborhood?
- What do you not like? What would you like to change? (Can you elaborate on that? Why?)
- **Do you feel at home here** (in your house & in your neighborhood)?

- Where do you usually go in your neighbourhood? Which place do you visit most frequently?
- What would be important to know about your neighbourhood if for us as visitors?

Access to open spaces and greenery

- Do you have access to open spaces and greenery? Are there sufficient open spaces?
- Do you usually go there? Is there anything you miss about the open spaces?
- Do you have your own place as well to do some gardening or planting? → What is the difference to the community garden?

Development of project

- How has the garden community changed in the last years?
- What was there before there was a garden? (Place-making)

Influences of processes, institutions, policies

- Have there been any changes in the recent years in this neighborhood?
- What is the role of the community building institutions?

- Programs by the municipality on open space?
- What did change through the *media reports* and TV documentations made about the project? Was there a lot of public interest?

Social composition of project

- In terms of general life style, do you think that most people that are part of the project are pretty much like you, or are they quite different from you?
→ In terms of age group, social group, ethnicity?

Different uses of the garden

- **Who comes here to do what?**
- What do you grow here? What do you have in this garden?
- Are there any restrictions on what you are not allowed to do here?

Joint activities and self-organization

- What do you do together?
- Are you gardening together? Do you have plant beds together? What do you grow?
- What needs to be organized? Who is doing what?

II. Empirical research questions:

How do the people *refer* to the space & place? (values, ideas/ideologies connected, personal importance & ownership etc.) – What are the *meanings* of the gardens to the people?

- Why do you do gardening here? Why do you participate in the project?
- What would you say are the three main reasons?
- Which aspects are important to you?
- What would you say is important when somebody wants to create a garden project, what are your tips and *recommendations*?
(Can you elaborate on that? Why?)

Expectations about garden projects

- What did you expect to happen in a garden project?

Difference to other open spaces and other social projects

- Why would you recommend somebody to do gardening or to join this project?
- What can you do here? What can you learn?
- Is the community garden just a normal green space like a park?
- Are there other places in the neighborhood like this? / Why do you come here then?
- Is community gardening just another form of civic/social engagement where people volunteer, like in social projects?

III. Social Capital

Project group relationships

- How would you describe the relations you have within your group of gardeners?
- Would you use the word friendship?

- Do you feel deep trust to the members of this group? When you say you trust them, what does this *mean* to you?
- *What do you talk about when you meet at the garden?*
- Do you talk about a personal matter, for example about someone you are close to or something you are worried about?
- Do you visit each other sometimes?

Mutual help

- In the past three months, has anyone from the garden project helped you with anything, such as repairs, moving furniture, cleaning? Or when you go away would you ask someone to water your plants for example?

Protest, confrontation and conflict

- Are there conflicts between people?
- Are there conflicts with the authorities or other groups/projects?
- Tell me a story of things that sometimes have been difficult in this project

Social contacts and networks created (bridging)

- Whom did you meet in the garden project?
- Is the project giving you access to other groups of people?
- Did any of the people you meet in your gardening project give you a valuable advice? (help to get some job or benefit?)
- Did you meet other people through them who were important to you?

Map of social contacts (draw on A3 paper!)

- Please draw the people that are important to you outside your family (neighbors, people who you have contact with)?

Personal social connectedness

- Do you know people outside of your family in your neighbourhood?
- Do you visit your neighbours? How often...?
- Would you like to have more and closer contacts within your neighborhood?
- Do you feel like these are many contacts? Where would you like to have more?
- Who do you turn to when you have difficulties?
- Whom would you ask for help?

Please also put **institutions or organizations that might be important...**

- Are you member of other groups, organizations, sports clubs etc. (How often do you go there, which functions?)

IV. Place-making

Sense of belonging, place identity

- Do you feel that that this is your garden, your space?
- Would you use the word “home” for it? (“bakermat”, “tehuis”)
- (do you feel at home here in your neighborhood?)

Appropriation of space

Meeting place - What kind of quality of the place is perceived (by different age/social groups)?

- Do you go to the community garden often? Why?
- Does the garden give you possibilities (to be outside in your neighborhood, to meet other people...)?
- Do people use it, do people meet etc.?
- Are there different groups who meet and use the space in their particular way? How do project participants, children, youth, women, men, elderly use the space?
- How and where do they meet? What qualities do they expect / want from the place?

Place quality in neighborhood

- Do you think that the surrounding neighbors and visitors from outside also benefit from the creation of the garden?
- Are there other meeting places, green spaces existing?
- What was there at the place before (empty land?) and what makes it a different now?
- What do you think would be missing, if this project would not be here?

V. Civic engagement = Volunteers doing public tasks

- How do you feel about maintaining a public space as a volunteer? Is your work compensated and valued sufficiently?
- Speaking about people who just come and use the park or even vandalism, what do you think about this? How do you cope with this?
- If part of welfare-to-work program: Is your work compensated and valued sufficiently? Do you enjoy it?

Why do people participate/get engaged in gardening projects?

- Why do they **not participate**?
 - Who does not participate?
-

VI. Personal questions

In order to understand your perceptions about the gardening project it is very interesting for me to know also a little bit about you personally.

- What can you tell me about yourself?

Living situation

- Are you 1) Married, 2) Living together partner, 3) Single, 4) Living with your parent(s), 5) Other
- Do you have children? If yes, how many?
- Are you living in the neighborhood? How long?
- Where do you live? (neighborhood, street)
- Household composition

Migration background and Culture

- Some people describe themselves by their ethnicity. How would you describe yourself?

Education & Training

- What is your level of education? (primary, secondary, etc.)
- Do you have any vocational training, or any training for job skills?

Employment

- Do you have a job?

About job/occupation:

- How many hours a week do you work in this job? Different jobs?
- Are you happy with your job? Is your job situation stable?

If no job:

- What situation then applies to you? Are you.... 1) Retired; 2) Unemployment / on unemployment benefits; 3) Unfit to work / on Social security; 4) On welfare
- Have you had a job in the past? Which?
- What do you do in your daily life?

Social activities & engagement

- other volunteering activities
- member of neighborhood organization, sport or cultural club
- political activism,
- member of religious organization, church, mosque etc.

VII. Future aspirations & perspectives

Aspirations/wishes for own life:

- Imagine yourself two years from now! How you think your life will be like?
- What are 3 things you consider important for your own / your families' future?

Aspirations/wishes for project:

- Imagine the project two years from now: what will have changed?
- What do you wish for the future for the community garden project?

Closing remarks:

- Thank you very much!
- Is there anything you would like to add? Anything I did not ask?
- Was there any question you did not like? (Feedback)
- Write down any information (table personal info above)
- Give flyer with own name, phone number for further questions!

Appendix B: Questionnaire

Questionnaire for surrounding neighbours

This questionnaire is part of student research, which deals with public green spaces in your neighbourhood. In particular we are interested in your opinion of [the Wijktuin in the Wijkpark Oude Westen OR Bürgergarten Laskerwiese] .

1. Do you know the Neighborhood Garden?

1) Yes 0) No

IF NO – skip interview and just collect basic data and questions starting page 3.

The researchers assure that the information from the questionnaire will be treated confidentially and the results will be used solely for the purposes of this academic research. The respondent will be kept anonymous, if they wish.

1) Yes 0) No

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

Main Questions:

Use and perception of the neighborhood park/garden:

1. Do you ever go to the Neighborhood garden? 1) Yes 0) No

[Make sure to differentiate between park and garden! in Rotterdam]

2. How often have you gone there since you live here / since it exists?

- 1-2 times
- 3-6 times
- Regularly once a week
- Regularly- several times per week
- Every day
- Several times per day

3. Please tell us shortly what you know about the neighbourhood garden.

(How would you describe it to a visitor?)

4. How do you find the garden [park], what is your opinion about it?

What do you like about it (what do you dislike)?

5. What has changed for the neighbourhood since the garden [park] is there?

(How can the neighbours benefit from the garden?)

6. What was there before?

7. Why do you go there? (Do you have a dog?)

8. What do you do there?

- sit
- meet
- eat/drink
- play
- sport
- other

9. Who else goes there to do what?

10. Do you ever **meet** people whom you know in the garden/park?

1) Yes 0) No

11. Do you meet regularly people there who you know?

Did you ever meet anyone there?

12. Who do you meet there and how would you describe the relationship you have to these people?

- People you just know from seeing them around incidentally
- people you say hello to
- neighbours
- friends
- colleagues
- other

13. Have you ever met **NEW** people in the park/garden that you had never met before?

1) Yes 0) No

Whom? Are you seeing these people regularly since you have met?

Perception of participants and organizers:

14. How would you describe the people who participate in the community garden? What do you think, what kind of people are they? (can you describe them in a phrase or a word?)

15. Please tell me do you agree or disagree with the following **statements** about the garden/park?

A= Agree, B= Disagree, C= Don't know / Why?

- The project is open for anybody to participate.

Why? _____

- It seems to be a closed group of people.

Why? _____

- The people from the project are my kind of people. (in terms of life style etc.)

Why? _____

- They always invite people to participate if you go there.

Why? _____

- I feel welcomed to go there and use the garden.

Why? _____

- I would feel confident to participate in the garden and have my own piece of garden there.

Why? _____

- I want to become a member of the garden project [Oude Westen].

Why? _____

Own involvement and ideas:

16. What would be the obstacles or the reasons for you to participate in this project?

17. What would be important for you to participate in such a community garden project?

(18. What kind of neighbourhood activity you then prefer? What public place would you rather go to?)

19. What do you think about the fact that people create and maintain a public green space in voluntary work?

20. Which benefit and advantages do you see for the participants?

Social connectedness in the neighborhood (Wish to increase):

21. Do you know people in your neighbourhood (outside your family)? For example: Do you know anybody in your street on a first names basis?

1) Yes 0) No

Do you visit your neighbours?

1) Yes 0) No

22. Would you like to have more contacts within your neighborhood?

1) Yes 0) No

Why _____

23. Would you like closer contacts?

1) Yes 0) No

How could you achieve this? With a certain group of people? _____

Now we would like to know something about your neighbourhood in general:

24. What kind of neighbourhood is this? What would be important for us to know about the neighbourhood as visitors?

25. Since when do you live here? (less than 6 month, ..years, all my life...)

26. Do you feel at home here (in your neighbourhood)?

1) Yes 0) No

Why? _____

27. In which house do you live? (street, housing type)

28. Where do you usually go in your neighbourhood? Which place do you visit most frequently?

29. Are there any places in your neighbourhood where you go to meet other people? (acquainted people or others)

1) Yes

0) No

Which _____

30. Is the **park** a meeting place? For whom? Who meets there usually?

31. Is the **garden** a meeting place?

32. Do you have **access to open spaces and greenery close to your house?**

1) Yes 0) No

33. Do you have an own place to do some gardening or planting?

1) Yes 0) No

→ Do you have your own garden? (Just for yourself or together with others?)

34. Would you like to have an open space for gardening or planting?

1) Yes 0) No

Why? _____

35. (Wishes and aspirations:)

Just imagine the neighbourhood and the life here in about two years from now, what do you think will have changed in your neighbourhood?

For our statistic we also need some personal information:

What is your highest grade completed? What is your highest degree?

[In Holland: 0) none, 1) primary, 2) high school (mavo, havo, nwo) 3) VMBO, 4) MBO, 5) HBO, 6) University and higher]

Do you work? Full time or occasionally? (In which profession?)

What situation then applies to you? Are you....(see table)

Basic information	Description		
Date of interview	2008		
Name of respondent			
Age			
Country of origin / Migration background			language
Sex of respondent	Male	Female	
Duration of stay (Country/City/Ward)			
Employment	Full	Occasionally	Unemployed
(Place of employment /Profession)			
Situation:	1) Retired 2) Unemployment / on unemployment benefits 3) Unfit to work / on Social security 4) On welfare 5) Education, school		
Level of Education	School years completed /degree:		
(Household size)			
Address of respondent			
Housing type			

00. Is there anything else you would like to tell me? Anything I did not ask? Anything, we have not talked about?

Closing remarks:

- Thank you very much!
- Check information if complete (table personal info, address etc.)
- Give flyer with name, phone number for further questions! Give present.

Appendix C: Overview on data collection

Table: Interviews Berlin

No	Interview partner	Type	Date	Age	Sex	Place	Recording	Durati on
1	Petra	participant	12.07. 08	40	f	in garden	only sound	01:20
2	Gerlinde	Participant - leading	15.07. 08	54	f	in garden	video all sound ok	01:25
3	Henner	participant	16.07. 08	76	m	in garden	video all sound ok	01:30
4	Frauke	organizer	21.07. 08	35	f	in garden	video all sound ok	01:33
5	Peer	participant	22.07. 08	42	m	in garden	video all sound ok	00:58
6	Frank	Participant profession al	22.07. 08	51	m	in garden	video all sound ok	01:10
7	Sabine	organizer	23.07. 08	53	f	at youth club	video all sound ok	01:48
8	Ronjon	participant	30.07. 08	30	m	in garden	video all sound ok	01:12
9	Jonas	participant	22.07. 08	12	m	in garden	video all sound ok	00:08
10	Jaqueline	participant	26.07. 08	31	f	in garden	video some sound ok	00:36

Table: Surveys Berlin

No.	Type of interviewee	Date	Place of encounter	Home address, street/ward	Age	Sex
1	neighbor	13.07.2008	at institute	Stralauer	29	m
2	neighbor	18.07.2008	in park	Stralauer	30	f
3	neighbor direct	18.07.2008	in front house	Persiusstr.	54	m
4	neighbor direct	18.07.2008	in front house	Persiusstr.	29	f
5	neighbor not direct	18.07.2008	on street	Wühlischstr.	24	f
6	neighbor direct	22.07.2008	in front house	Persiusstr.	42	m
7	neighbor direct	22.07.2008	in front house	Persiusstr.	13	f
8	neighbor direct	24.07.2008	supermarket	Corinthstr.	57	f
9	neighbor direct	24.07.2008	supermarket	Stralauer Allee	28	m
10	neighbor direct	25.07.2008	supermarket	Corinthstr.	27	f
11	not neighbor / direct workplace	25.07.2008	at workplace	Biesdorf	32	f
12	not neighbor / park user	25.07.2008	in park	Prenzl. Berg	23	m
13	neighbor direct	30.07.2008	in park	Corinthstr.	32	m
14	neighbor direct	30.07.2008	in park	Markgrafendamm	22	f
15	neighbor not direct	30.07.2008	in park	Modersohnstr.	21	f

Table: Interviews Rotterdam

No	Interview partner	Type of interviewee	Date	Age	Sex	Place of interview	Recording	Duration
1	Wilma	participant/ lead function	01.07. 08	55	f	in garden	video some, sound ok	01:30
2	Anita	Participant / professional	03.07. 08	48	f	in garden	video all sound ok	01:35
3	Hellen	participant	03.07. 08	55	f	at home	video all sound ok	01:15
4	Gera	participant	08.08.08	79	f	in Aktie group	video all sound end missing	01:35
5	Heleen	participant	11.08. 08	76	f	in garden	Video, sound damaged	01:36
6	Liesbeth	participant	12.08. 08	48	f	in garden	video all sound ok	01:23
7	Arina	participant	13.08. 08	44	f	in garden	video all sound ok	01:21
8	Jeroen	participant	14.08. 08	42	m	in garden	video all sound ok	01:20
9	Natalie	organizer	05.09. 08	30	f	on public square	video all sound ok	01:40

Table: Surveys Rotterdam

No.	Type of interviewee	Date	Place of encounter	Home address, street/ward	Age	Sex
1	neighbour direct	11.08.2008	ring bell	Gouvernedwarsstraat	39	f
2	neighbour direct	11.08.2008	ring bell	Gouvernestraat	22	f
3	neighbour direct	11.08.2008	ring bell	Gouvernestraat	52	f
4	neighbour direct	11.08.2008	ring bell	Gouvernestraat	25	m
5	neighbour direct	11.08.2008	ring bell	Gouvernestraat	48	m
6	neighbour direct	11.08.2008	ring bell	Gouvernestraat	41	m
7	neighbour direct	13.08.2008	front of house	Gouvernestraat	30-40	m
8	not nb/but work	13.08.2008	in street	Gouvernestraat	30	m
9	neighbour direct	13.08.2008	in street	lives nearby	40-50	m
10	neighbour direct	13.08.2008	in garden	lives nearby	22-26	m
11	neighbour direct	13.08.2008	in park	Kruiskade	65-70	m
12	neighbour direct	11.08.2008	in park	Nieuwe Binnenweg	57	f
13	neighbour direct	13.08.2008	ring bell	Westersingel 30	50	m

Appendix D: Findings on the project groups - different roles and functions

In the following, an additional level of analysis on the findings on the project group concerning different roles, functions, and capabilities is presented.

The analysis of both projects based on the empirical data from the interviews results in observations concerning the different roles and functions within the project groups (see also Table 4 below).

First of all mentioned by all respondents in both projects is the importance of the commitment and motivation of the project group.

*“There have to be people who really take care of the project and who care about it.”
(Gerlinde, Participant 2/ Berlin)*

Engaged individuals who drive the project are important. One of the organizers in Berlin says *“you need people with visions and staying power”* who initiate the project and stay with it from the beginning on. *“But you also need many people who join in and participate.”* (Sabine, Organizer 7/ Berlin). Some respondents talk about the necessity of a core group of people that are reliable and continuously present especially on the garden work days *“to keep the project alive”* (Ronjon, Participant 8/ Berlin).

“This is like a group here. It is comprised of very different people who fulfill their different functions.” (Petra, Participant 1/ Berlin)

In both projects it is obvious that the participants are little involved in the organizational tasks and have little knowledge on how the financing of the project works. Sometimes they even have false perceptions on these issues.

“I think Wilma is for taking care of money things, or Anita. I do not know how that works. When you have to think how to do this and that - there is no fun no more.” (Liesbeth, Participant 6/ Rotterdam)

So it is important to note that some active participants want to have the responsibility, whereas the majority of participants prefer not to get involved in the organization. This point of view is also very much confirmed by the non-participating neighbors, who say that they would not like too many obligations and that organizational responsibility. Rigid structures and duties are the main obstacles to joining such a project. Here the concept of „the freedom to leave and to do what you like” seems to be an issue.

In Berlin they are clearly facing the problem that people do not get involved enough in the communal responsibilities. The maintenance of the public part of the park is mainly taken up by one volunteer who is there full-time together with some paid workers from the Youth Club. Similarly, in Rotterdam the organizers argue that there has to be a paid employee responsible to hold things together.

In this respect, my findings show that there might be two different functions necessary: a leading and responsible organizer and a “good heart” of the project. *“You need a good soul, like Peer.”* (Participant 1/ Berlin). In Berlin it is agreed upon unanimously that there are two persons who assume these roles Peer and Gerlinde.

In Rotterdam there is a strong and leading organizer (Wilma, Participant 1/ Rotterdam). Some respondents say she can take both roles but other participants see her more a coordinator and feel that the “good soul” in a more social sense is missing. They say there should be person like that who is there most of the time, really cares about the garden and also has a social function, “who likes to have people” and who invites people to come and talks to them.

Additionally, the findings show that in both projects there is “somebody who does the social work” (Sabine/ Berlin; Natalie/ Rotterdam) that is comprised of counseling and conflict mediation (as discussed above).

Natalie brings in an interesting point: *“In every project you have the Wilmas or the Piete, you need them. I call those people ‘Uncle Piet’.”* (Natalie, Organizer 9/ Rotterdam). There can be one active volunteer who takes the role of ‘Uncle Piet’ and sustains the entire project (Gerlinde and Peer in Berlin; Wilma in Rotterdam). But she finds it important to not only rely on these ‘leading’ volunteers in such a project.

“It is always important to have not only ‘one mayor of the street’ like we say. If the mayor dies the project dies. If you do not have a coordinator who works things out, who you can carry it on, the project drops. A good coordinator, who is in the garden and who knows the garden. Somebody official.” (Natalie, Organizer 9/ Rotterdam)

Her recommendation to have an official coordinator goes along with the above mentioned fact that some participants prefer not to have too much responsibility. *“Because they are still volunteers, they need a professional coordination.”* (ibid).

Other participants in Berlin raised a similar issue that there should be a professional support and guidance in the planning and implementation of the project: *“that at least there are two professionals involved who know what they are doing and that the others actually listen to them.”* (Gerlinde Participant 2/ Berlin).

Therefore, in such a public space project it seems to be necessary to have a professional (paid or volunteering) management connecting with the public administration institutions, also in order to get the permits and the official contracts arranged. These persons have to have also planning skills and a long term vision of the project. Besides, the person for the “money and government connection” is most likely to be connected to an institution or association (these persons are clearly identifiable in both projects: Sabine & Frauke in Berlin; Natalie & Wilma in Rotterdam).

“In any case you need a person who is really supporting the project fully. Who also has the personal and professional abilities to push it forward, like Sabine. This also concerns questions about authorities and financing. That is a lot of work.” (Petra, Participant 1/ Berlin)

Whether this role can be also taken by a volunteer differs in the different project approaches or ideologies in Berlin and Rotterdam (see also Chapter 4.5.2). Likewise, it also depends on the characteristics of the participants, if they can and want to take such a responsibility or not.

“You cannot depend only on the volunteers. [...] They really need the support. So you need a good guidance there. An employee, who can do everything is the key.” (Natalie, Organizer 9/ Rotterdam)

In addition, all participants find it important to have “someone who knows about gardens” (Liesbeth). They want somebody whom they can learn from and who coordinates the gardening. Especially in a bigger project like Berlin there has to be a person with technical skills in construction and maintenance. Or these tasks have to be carried out by the municipality which involves usually more complicated bureaucratic processes (see Chapter 4.5.3).

Table 4: Summary on project group roles and functions

Recommendation/Lesson Learned	Berlin	Rotterdam
Project group - different identified roles & functions:		
1. coordinator/organizer “leading” participant	(+)	(+)
2. “the good heart and soul” of the project	(+)	(-)
3. “social worker”, conflict mediator	(+)	(+)
4. „the money and government connection“	(+)	(+)
5. gardening skills	(+)	(+/-)
6. technical skills in construction & maintenance	(+)	(-)
Need of participants and organizers who commit	(+)	(+)
Not too many organizational obligations and rules (not wanted by participants)	(+)	(+)
Certain tasks need professional/paid responsibility		(+)
vs. all managed by volunteers	(+)	

Note: (+) = mentioned to be existing; (-) = not mentioned to be existing; (+/-) = ambiguous

As briefly summarized in Table 4 there are different roles, functions and capabilities that were found important for the project groups of the community gardens (mentioned likewise but existing in different degrees in the two case study projects).

To conclude, important seems to be that project group bonding and an organizational structure as well as strong personal commitment seems to be vital. On the other hand also the freedom to and to do what you like should not be lost. This is indicated by the fact that both participants and neighbors did not want to be confronted with organizational obligations and rules in the project.

Appendix E: Coding scheme – all categories

No.	Research Questions	Codes	Concepts/Categories & explanations
	Personal characteristics:		
1		Date	
2		P_age	age
3		P_sex	gender
4		P_ed	education
5		P_in nb	living in the nb? Since?
6		P_employment	employment status
7		P_situation	Living situation
8		P_engagement	Personal engagement in project, open description, why got in garden project
9		P_participating since	Time member in the garden
10		P_role	Personal role, function, responsibilities
11	Personal attitude, ideology	P_attitude	interpretative (and quote) see below M_personal!
	Perceptions and meanings		
12	Meanings	M_	How do the people refer to the space & place? What are the meanings of the gardens to the people? (values, ideas/ideologies connected, personal importance & ownership etc.) Why participate or why not? Why gardening? Meaning of the project and the place?
13	Meanings	M_story	Meaning expressed in personal stories or stories about others
14	Meanings	M_personal	Giving a personal motivation or meaning, also meaning related to the personal life situation (personal motivation, age, life circumstances)
15		M_personal	a) learning personally, skills, culture, language, everyday wisdom
16		M_personal	b) recognition
17		M_personal	c) doing
18		M_personal	d) social contacts/bridging, meet people, togetherness, community
19	Meanings	M_sociability (M_gezelligheid)	Sociability, "Gezelligheid" vs. Rather stay alone
20	Meanings	M_healing	"healing & calming" (often connected to personal crisis) health

21	Meanings	M_busy	occupation, task in life, substitute for work/job (to keep yourself busy, have occupation instead of work or really see it as work)
22	Meanings	M_ideology	Ideologies of creating place quality and neighborhood community, civic engagement, voluntarism
23	Meanings	M_joint	Joint activities and self-organization
24	Meanings	M_nature	access to nature and greenery, natural capital, open air
25	Meanings	M_gardening	gardening as activity, doing something at fresh air, subsistence, growing own vegetable & fruit
26	Meanings	M_education	educational and emancipation learn yourself or teach (children, others)
27	Meanings other	M_public	meaning of the project is that it is public, something public for the public (could be also pm!)
Recommendations			
28	recommendations	M_recommend	Recommendations general, lessons learned from this project and expectations about garden projects different dimensions and aspects of what garden projects need to be successful:
28		M_recommend	a person, who...has special knowledge, engagement, leadership skills
28		M_recommend	structure/organisation
28		M_recommend	group, that...people, who...are sociable, inviting etc.
28		M_recommend	technical knowledge
Mixed categories			
29	Meanings	M_differentiation	Discrimination of personal concepts: What is the perceived difference to other activities, other open spaces and other social engagement?
30	Reason for not-participation	M_no participate	Why people do not participate
31	Statements about others	on Name	talking about the motivations, attitudes and meanings of the others...
Volunteer work			
32	Forms of civic engagement	volunteer work own garden	"volunteer work" vs. having own garden, just gardening etc.
33		volunteer work	Meaning of "volunteer work"
34		volunteer work	Feelings about Volunteers doing public tasks without compensation (insurance, payment etc.), service delivery and management?

35		protest	Is there protest or confrontation involved? NOT FOUND, see above M_ideology!
	Place-making		
36	Place-making	pm	Place-making in general
37	Place-making	pm_belonging	sense of belonging, place-identity, feeling at home, own space, belonging
38	Place-making	pm_appropriation	appropriation of space e.g. do use the space together with others? For own purposes - interpretative!
39	Place-making	pm_meeting	meeting place
	Place quality		
40	Place quality	pm_place quality	just quality of place
41	Place quality	pm_place quality	What kind of quality of the place is perceived (by different age/social groups)? (physical and social characteristics) - <i>benefit for participants</i>
42	Urban place quality	pm_place quality	Is place quality created in the <i>neighbourhood</i> through the garden? Do not only the project participants but also the surrounding neighbors and visitors from outside benefit from the creation of the garden as green space? “Added value”, benefit, what makes the place different now? - benefit for nb
43	Place-making	pm	vandalism
	Social group and roles		
44	Project Group	group	Who belongs to ingroup “the gardener community”? Social /cultural mix Who can join the group and how? How do you get in? Openness?
45	Project Group	roles	Social roles in project (see also above personal roles)
46	Different engagements group members	engagement_others	Who is doing what? different engagement in project in general in group, others, different groups and kinds of engagement
	Social connectedness		
47	Is social capital created?	sc_created	in the classic sense...
48	Social connectedness	sc_	in general
49	Social connectedness	sc_ingroup_relations	What kinds of bonds/ties do exist? type of personal relations/contacts, (friendship, acquaintance, colleagues...) What do you talk about? bonding social capital
50	Ingroup	sc_ingroup_incommo n	What are common concerns/interests?

51	Ingroup	sc_ingroup_incommo n	Is there a common culture or identity (within and beyond the garden project)? Difference in culture...
52	Ingroup	sc_ingroup_conflict	conflicts in group (mediated by what?)
53		sc_exclusion	Exclusion from or by any group, institution or from any activity
54	Ingroup	sc_trust	Trust in group Who you turn to if difficulties?/ask for help?
55	Ingroup	sc_help	Reciprocity, mutual help,
56	Ingroup	sc_advice	advice (concerning problems, job situation, institutional bureaucracy, money and benefits)
57	Social contacts and networks created	sc_contacts_created	Social contacts and networks created (which, quantity)
58	Bridging	sc_bridging	Is there bridging to other social groups? scope and quality of bridging social capital
59	Social connectedness/bridging	sc_bridging_resource s	role of knowledge transfer
60	Social connectedness/bridging	sc_bridging_resource s	access to new institutions, networks
60	Social connectedness/bridging	sc_bridging_resource s	access to... other cultures, traditions
Map of social contacts:			
61		sc_conflict	conflicts with <i>other</i> groups, within neighbourhood (or in personal social network)
62	Personal Map of social contacts:	sc_personal	characteristics of personal network: personal social capital and connectedness, personal “bonding social capital”
63	Personal	sc_personal	content with quantity and quality/closeness of contacts? Want more? Few close or many lose contacts?
64		sc_used	distribution and use of own social capital, Do they distribute their own social capital?
65	using own social ability	social ability (new!)	personal social abilities are used to create sc or to build up the project / community
66		sc_personal_member ship	membership in groups & organizations and engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • other volunteering activities • member of neighborhood organization, sport or cultural club • political activism • member of religious organization, church, mosque etc.

	Personal network types		
67	What kinds of social networks can be found among the participants?	sc_personal_nw1	1. Isolated people "people have small and low-density networks, arising from personal circumstances such as unemployment or mental problems."
68		sc_personal_nw2	2. Segregated personal networks "relationships to several quite distinct individuals to satisfy different needs. Many different loose relationships, which all have their individual quality rather than a close and intimate
69		sc_personal_nw3	3. Encapsulated network relations "a close-knit, small network, not selective, with frequent contact between members (such as peer group or kinship networks). The people have a similar backgrounds, standards and values, they are focused inward and make little use of outside community building facilities etc."
70		sc_personal_nw4	4. Integrated networks "relatively extended networks, not too widely connected, not too close and frequent, who form clusters and meet, but not locally
	Other concepts		
71		future	Future aspirations & perspectives on project
72	Other themes/concepts	other	undefined but important...themes/concepts